

**HAFEZ AL-ASSAD,  
TYRANT**  
JESSE HELMS

the weekly

# Standard

JUNE 26, 2000

\$3.95

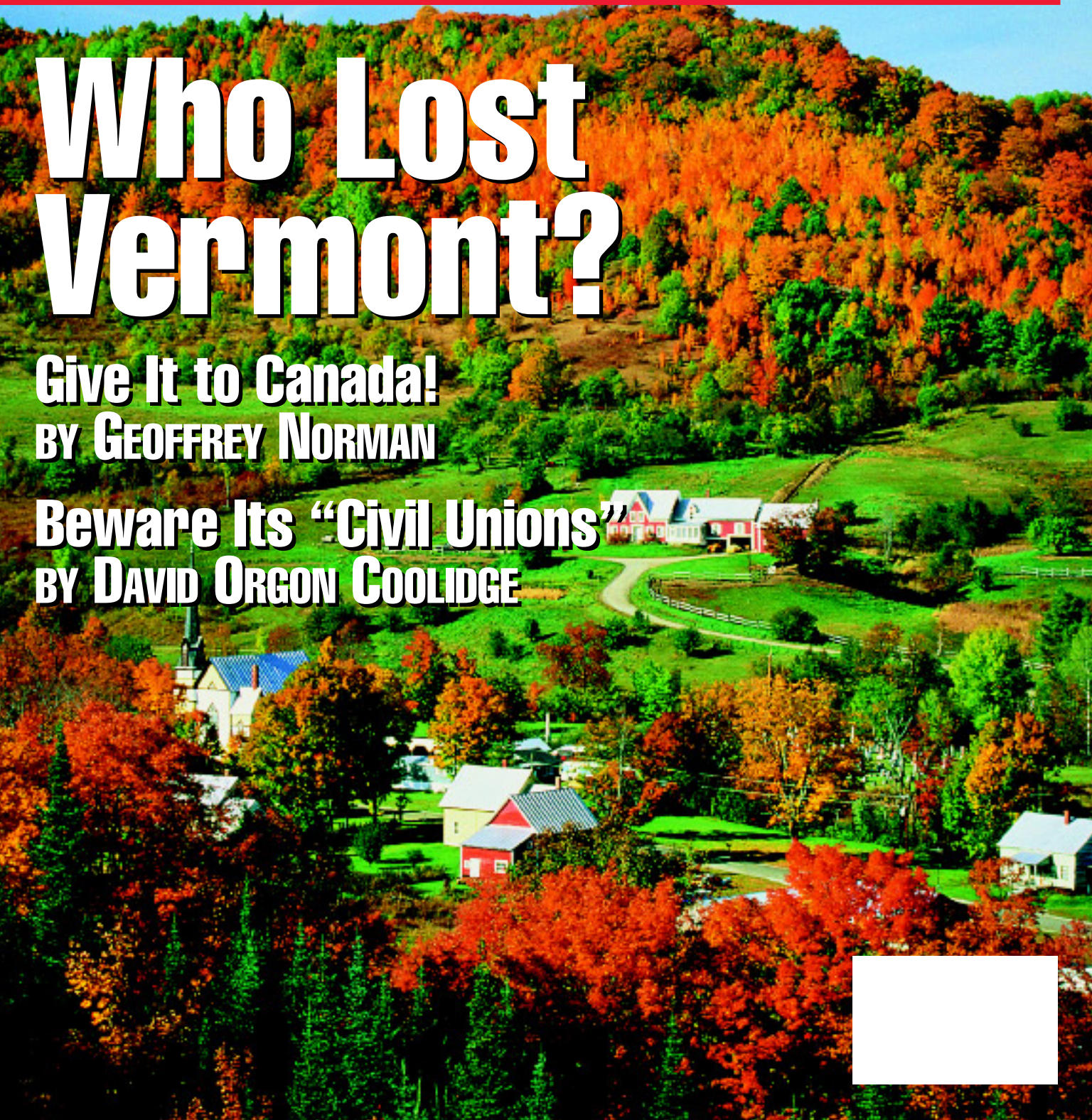
## Who Lost Vermont?

**Give It to Canada!**

**BY GEOFFREY NORMAN**

**Beware Its "Civil Unions"**

**BY DAVID ORGON COOLIDGE**





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the weekly  
**Standard**

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# Al Gore, Still a Slumlord

As Matt Labash detailed in these pages last week, for the past 13 months Al Gore has effectively served as slumlord to the Mayberry family of Carthage, Tennessee, his tenants in a decrepit four-bedroom rambler roughly 150 yards from the Gore family farmhouse.

Overflowing toilets, peeling plaster, stripped linoleum floors, and backed-up sinks are but a few of the inconveniences the Mayberrys have endured. Not that they suffered silently. Tracy Mayberry, the family matron, says she complained more than 30 times to Gore's property managers—to no avail. When she was finally served an eviction notice on May 26, Tracy invited a local Nashville television station to her house for a tour, prompting Gore to plead ignorance of the entire situation, reverse the eviction notice, and promise necessary repairs to her home.

Gore's rapid-response damage control anesthetized the media at large. In what nowadays passes for "journalistic responsibility," the networks ignored the story altogether, major papers ran single wire dispatches, and the Nashville *Tennessean* failed to do any

original reporting until a full week and a half after the Mayberrys went public. The *Chicago Tribune* disparaged the entire affair as a "tempest in a toilet," saying Gore was too busy to have knowledge of such matters. Maybe so, but Tracy Mayberry told Labash she makes her rent checks out directly to Gore, that she was told by his property managers that they could do no repairs without his consent, that she asked them to secure Gore's consent on more than five occasions, and that she even called Gore's Carthage office some months ago to complain, but was referred right back to Gore's property managers.

Some of the promised repairs were underway when our intrepid reporter visited the Mayberrys on June 6. But a day after his visit, Tracy Mayberry reported to him that one of her toilets still leaked from its base, and that her new linoleum was buckling into gaping holes in the underlying floor. None of this seemed to matter to Gore, who said on June 14, "as soon as I found out about the problem, I took steps to make sure it was resolved." Not so, says Mayberry. From June 7 to June 13, she says

she didn't see another worker. Meanwhile, Gore's property manager and lawyer suggested the disrepair may have been her family's fault. Tracy says that her boxer, Miss Lady, was poisoned and died over the weekend. Tracy doesn't know who did it, but the dog was felled by bad turkey—which the Mayberrys haven't eaten since last Christmas.

All this was enough to make the Mayberrys pack their things; Tracy and her husband planned to drop the kids off at her mother's place and look for a new place to live. But Nashville's NewsChannel 5 revisited the Mayberrys last Tuesday and detailed the continued decrepitude. Voilà! Now Tracy says she suddenly has new gutters, a (second) new tile floor, and the expectation of visits from an exterminator and painting crew. So is she happy with the vice president, whom she promised to bake a peach cobbler when he apologetically called her and invited himself over for dinner? Not very. "I'll hold out" on the peach cobbler, she says, "That's for good people." About Gore, she says, "I feel like he's lied to me, like he's let me down. If he's going to lie to me, imagine what he'll do to the country." ♦

## Heavy Weather

The American Bar Association has found some freelance work for Bernardine Dohrn, the former Weather Underground terrorist and fugitive. Ms. Dohrn, who now heads the Children and Family Justice Center at Northwestern University, is scheduled to lecture a roomful of lawyers at the ABA's annual meeting in New York's Waldorf-Astoria on July 7. She will not be lecturing about the manufacture of bombs, a subject on which Dohrn's expertise was once so acute that the

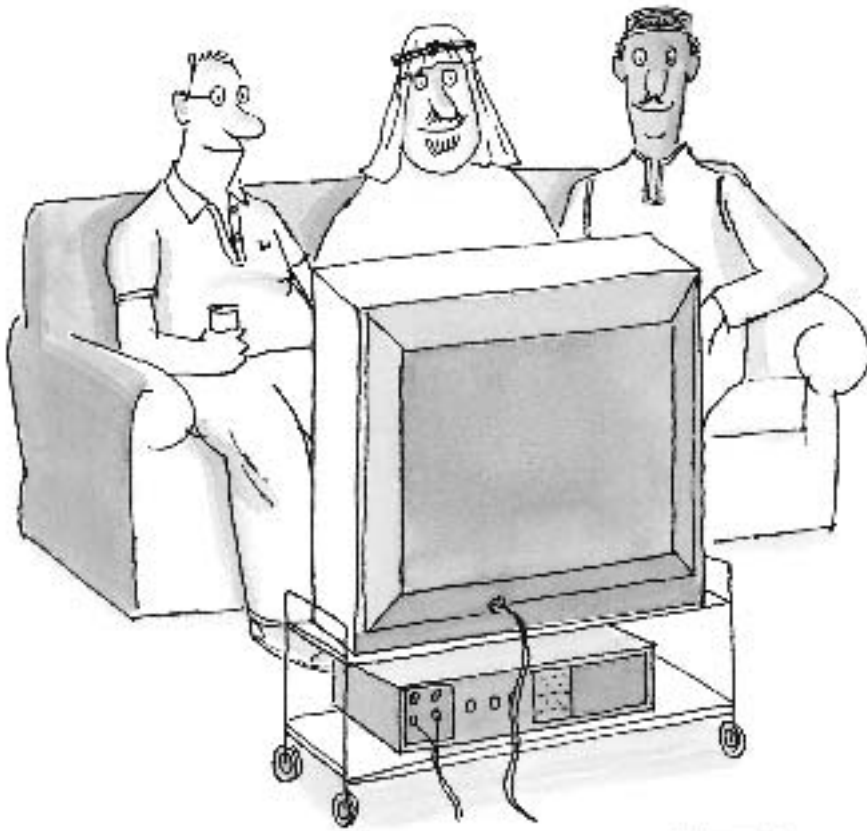
FBI placed her on its most wanted list in the 1970s. Dohrn will not be lecturing about the murder of policemen, though here, too, she presumably knows quite a lot; years ago she was sentenced to seven months in jail for refusing to cooperate in a cop-killer trial. Nor will Dohrn be lecturing on the Tate-LaBianca murders (Dohrn once gave a speech praising Charles Manson as a "right on" revolutionary).

No. Ms. Dohrn is scheduled to appear on a panel devoted to "Elián González and the Forgotten Children in Immigration Proceedings." No doubt her expertise in the matter arises

from her long sympathies with the tyrant who rules the country Elián will soon have the misfortune to live in. ♦

## Let's Chat

Tim Graham, director of media analysis at the Media Research Center, writes to explain "the mystery of why Greg Craig received no hostile questions" during a *Washington Post* online chat session about Craig's legal service to Fidel Castro. Turns out Craig's easy time of it, reported a couple of weeks ago in THE SCRAPBOOK,



## THE U.N. CONFERENCE ON MEN

P. J. Turner

was no mystery at all. "I was graciously invited for an Elián chat three days before Craig," says Graham. "The *Post* staff allows the guest to select the questions to be answered. I heard from several people that they submitted many unfavorable questions to Craig. He simply chose to pick all the compliments and softballs. Isn't that a suitably Havana-style approach?" ♦

## British PC Twits

On the website for Stockport College in northwest England, an article about the school's "very caring"

tutorial system and its many study groups carries the headline "Individualism Reigns." Which is almost as funny as the article describing the school's recent Diversity Day celebration, featuring "clowns of a mature age."

And now Stockport, a "college for higher and further education," has surpassed itself in foolishness. English newspapers reported last week that Stockport has banned the use of some 40 words and expressions. Adhering to the ban will henceforth be "a condition of service and admission" for employees and students both.

What's been banned, exactly? Prohibited phrases include "slaving over a

hot stove, which minimises the horror and oppression of the slave trade." Nor can you use the sexist term "history"; the judgmental words "normal couple"; and "crazy," "mad," and "manic"—terms "offensive to some with mental health problems." Also, you're not allowed to say "lady" or "gentleman" because of their "class implications." "Cripple" and "queer" are *verboten* unless they are "reclaimed" by the differently abled and oriented.

In other Limey news, the manager of a jobs program run by England's ministry of education and employment tried to block publication of a help wanted ad for someone "hard-working and enthusiastic." Such requirements, he thought, were discriminatory. ♦

## Slow on the Uptake

David Talbot, CEO of *Salon.com*, an actual company trading shares on an actual stock exchange, as quoted in *Mediaweek*: "Profits are a major mantra right now." ♦

## Even Slower on the Uptake

Thomas L. Friedman, the actual foreign affairs expert at the *New York Times*, in his June 12 column: "If Syria were in Asia, it would be called North Korea." Syria is in Asia. ♦

## Congratulations

The second annual Eric Breindel Award for Excellence in Opinion Journalism, named in memory of the late, great *New York Post* editor and columnist (and occasional WEEKLY STANDARD contributor), has been won by essayist Tom Flannery of the Pennsylvania weekly *Carbondale News*. ♦

# Casual

## FATHER OF THE GRAD

**T**he difference between a good high school commencement address and a bad one is very simple: The good one is shorter. There's an additional requirement, however, if your own child is one of the graduates and sitting among friends in the audience. In that case, a good commencement address is both short and in no way—and I mean *noooooo* way—embarrassing to your child.

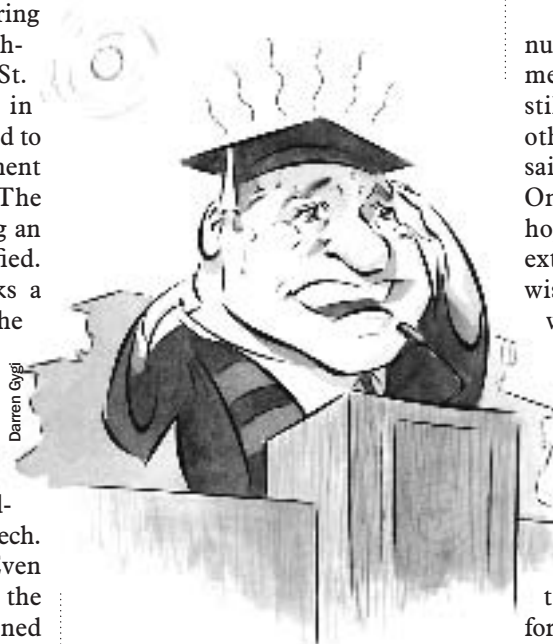
My moment of coping with these twin obligations came on a sweltering Saturday this June when my daughter Grace graduated from St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School in Alexandria, Virginia. I was flattered to be asked to give the commencement speech, but I wasn't fooled. The school has a tradition of choosing an old graduate to speak. I qualified. When possible, the school picks a graduate who also has a kid in the new graduating class. I qualified again. No one else did. I was the speaker by default.

All this made Grace very anxious. In the week leading up to graduation day, she asked repeatedly if I'd begun working on my speech. Her friends inquired as well. Even parents of her friends asked how the speech was coming. I said I planned to write it the night before, which was true. The speech had to be short—less than 10 minutes—so I figured it wouldn't take too long to write. This made Grace all the more nervous.

Actually I began writing the speech in my mind days ahead. And it wasn't going very well until I consulted my friend Brit Hume, who had spoken at his daughter Virginia's graduation in 1983 and more recently to graduates of a Catholic girls' school in Middleburg, Virginia. Brit was adamant about one thing. Forget the school officials. Forget the teachers. Forget the parents. Amuse the kids. Be funny.

Sage advice. The trouble was, I'm not an innately hilarious guy. When I tell a joke at home, my son Freddy usually responds by saying something like: "Wow, that's one of the funniest things I've ever heard. That should be written down. It belongs in the Comics Hall of Fame." Just in case I miss the point, Freddy adds, "I was being sarcastic, Dad."

As I was noodling about the speech, it popped into my mind to make fun of one of the



strengths of St. Stephen's & St. Agnes: its relentless training of students in the art of writing papers. The school is great at this. One reason is that it requires more writing of papers than any other school on the entire planet. The students complain and their parents moan about being called on for help too often. But the kids *do* learn how to write.

My advice was for them to relax. St. Stephen's & St. Agnes is hard. College is easy. St. Stephen's & St. Agnes is far more competitive and academically rigorous than when I was a stu-

dent there. Now they read Ovid in the ninth grade. I'd never heard of Ovid until I reached college. When they get to college, I told the kids, they'll have the luxury of scouting around for courses that require no papers. Not only that, they can take courses that meet only on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, creating a three-day week. They can avoid courses that require reading *Moby Dick*. They'll get longer vacations.

They laughed a bit. Fortunately, I had funnier stuff, notably what Brit calls the four big lies of academic life: (1) I'll get up early and study. (2) I'll study over the weekend. (3) I'll do the term paper over vacation. (4) We'll study together. I mentioned these slowly and the kids laughed at each one.

Thanks to my habit of saving nuggets from other folks' commencement speeches over the years, I had still more material. "More than any other time in history," one speaker said, "mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness, the other, to total extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose correctly." That was Woody Allen.

My favorite graduation address was given by Tom Boswell, the great sportswriter for the *Washington Post* and a 1967 grad of St. Stephen's & St. Agnes. I discovered it in an alumni publication. His counsel was: Aim lower, work less, don't be ambitious, don't worry—be happy, live for today. The point of this counterintuitive advice was that you don't have to be a humorless grind to have a successful life.

When I finished speaking, I wasn't sure how I'd done. I was dripping in sweat, partly from the heat, partly from apprehension. I had to wait until graduation was over to consult my audience of one, Grace. She didn't seem embarrassed and I soon found out why. The girls had laughed politely during the speech, but the boys—well, they had guffawed. More than that, I couldn't have asked for.

**FRED BARNES**



## YOU'RE TOO KIND

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL was being unnecessarily kind to the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in his June 12 editorial ("Stupid and Cruel, but Not Illegal"). First, courts need not defer as much to policies made up on the spot as they must to longstanding policies. They could have stood on that principle and not deferred as much to the INS on whether Elián's uncle was entitled to file for asylum on his behalf.

Second, the 11th Circuit didn't go far enough in determining whether Juan Miguel González really is a hostage. If he is, there is a conflict large enough to drive the case to the opposite conclusion. Arguably, whether he is or is not a hostage is a question for the INS, whose conclusion, once reached, is a factual finding entitled to deference and indeed not reversible unless clearly erroneous. But the agency did not seriously investigate this issue. That failing could and should have been shoved up their nose.

Third, the court did not make it as clear as it could and should have that the administration was lying about the "fact" that it was simply following the law. The separation of powers doctrine has been around for a long time and has taken many harder knocks than would have been delivered if the 11th Circuit had written a tome on agency law and then said Elián could stay. If the separation of powers doctrine really would have been damaged, the Supreme Court could have fixed it. A cry from the heart, even if it came from a judge's heart, wouldn't have destroyed the rule of law; it's been damaged enough in the last eight years by this administration.

Of course, Caldwell is certainly right about the Republicans; what a bunch of unprincipled wimps.

JEROME MARCUS  
*Philadelphia, PA*

## THE CHAIRMEN SPEAK

TOM DONNELLY'S CRITIQUE of the new report of the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century ("the Hart-Rudman Commission") was not a serious effort either to inform

your readers of its content or to engage its ideas ("Newt Gingrich's Last Boondoggle," May 29). Instead, Donnelly fired ad hominem shots at commission members and misstated the report's basic message.

Since Donnelly did not interview any of the 14 members of the commission or its executive director prior to the publication of his article, we assume that his interest lay less in objective reporting than in polemic. That is his prerogative. But for those WEEKLY STANDARD readers who value accuracy, perhaps a fairer description of the commission's origins and its work would have value.

It was indeed Speaker of the House



Newt Gingrich's idea to create a federal advisory commission to examine the national security environment this nation will likely face in the next quarter century. Further, he suggested to President Clinton and Secretary of Defense William Cohen that such a commission devise a new national security strategy appropriate to that emerging environment, and then review this country's national security structures, devised in 1947 for the Cold War, to examine their continued relevance.

Beyond Donnelly's heavy-handed swipe at Gingrich and selected other commissioners, the author misunderstands the process that led fourteen respected Americans with divergent

views and constituencies to reach agreement on a variety of critical issues facing this nation. The purpose of a federal commission is not to enthrone any particular ideological orthodoxy—whether the one Donnelly supports or any other. The purpose is to extract as much politically significant convergence as possible from a group of experienced individuals, and that purpose has been served well.

Since that convergence does not mesh with Donnelly's own views, he labels the Commission's work "declinist." On the contrary, our report insists on the imperatives of American global leadership, the promotion of freedom, and a determined commitment to maintain U.S. economic, technological, and military strength. It defends the principle of American sovereignty from various and assorted attempts to eviscerate it. It calls upon this country to seize opportunities for positive leadership as well as to safeguard the nation from a new era's dangers (such as ensuring unfettered U.S. access to space and cyberspace). In the military field, the commission calls for modernized capabilities to deal with the entire spectrum of threats—which, we say, will require *increased* defense spending. We argue for the elevation of preemption as an option against threats involving weapons of mass destruction. We call for a comprehensive reassessment of U.S. strategic needs before engaging in post-START II strategic arms control negotiations.

In short, we advocate a smart, agile strategy to protect U.S. national interests and to promote freedom. Given the remarkable political diversity of our commission, Donnelly might equally have chosen to welcome the report as a sign of an emerging national consensus behind such a commitment.

To be sure, our report does call for the United States to engage with capable and like-minded nations in a cooperative effort, rather than imposing our will on others. We do have a word or two to say about the importance of a more restrained tone in U.S. public diplomacy. We also advocate observing more rigorous priorities with regard to U.S. interventions overseas so that we don't exhaust ourselves, the better to

foster American leadership for the long run.

We believe the strategy we proposed in our report is consistent with this nation's interests and its democratic ideals. We believe it is a strategy capable of implementation by the next president of the United States. Donnelly is entitled to differ with these views, but not by sacrificing accuracy and intellectual engagement for ideological ax grinding. THE WEEKLY STANDARD's readers deserved better.

GARY HART

WARREN RUDMAN

*Co-Chairmen, U.S. Commission  
on National Security/21st Century  
Arlington, VA*

TOM DONNELLY RESPONDS: Two points in the Hart-Rudman letter are worth another "heavy-handed swipe." First, the strategy report of the Hart-Rudman Commission does indeed include a number of elements that ought to please those who believe that American geopolitical leadership is something worth preserving. Alas, the very fine principles and recommendations mentioned in the report and in the letter above were contradicted or undercut by other elements of the report. While a full textual analysis of the report's contradictions was beyond the scope of the original article, I did attempt to convey this quality, which pervades the commission's strategy report.

The second point, captured well by Hart and Rudman, is an even greater concern. The chairmen proudly trumpet their commission's bipartisan consensus, and that's just the problem. In effect, the commission limited its policy recommendations to those that both liberals and conservatives could agree to. By placing political consensus before policy coherence, the commission shortchanges both. Some policies are simply superior to others for preserving American power and promulgating American principles; likewise, disputes about foreign and defense policy are legitimate matters of political debate. This post-Cold War era, where fundamental questions about America's role in the world remain unanswered, demands more debate and less premature "convergence."

## THE AUTHORS SPEAK

WE FEEL COMPELLED to respond to Fred Barnes's cover story, "Suburban Beauty," reviewing our book, *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (May 22). Despite his "sprawl is good" message, we are grateful for such a thoughtful discussion of the issue. We can't help but wonder, however, whether THE WEEKLY STANDARD's readers see as much beauty as Barnes does in the suburban images that accompany his article. Are these tawdry environments places where people really want to live, or where they must live because nothing better is available at the same price?

We argue in our book not for the elimination of suburbia, but for the replacement of the housing-tract-and-strip-mall suburban model with the traditional suburban model, in which the houses are not all identical, the school is within walking distance, the shopping is on a nearby main street, and thirteen car trips per day—the current household average—are not mandatory. In most cases, such a replacement calls not for more government intervention but less, since the traditional suburban model is currently illegal in most places. If developers were allowed to build small towns once again, our guess is that many of Barnes's happy sprawlers would vote with their feet.

JEFF SPECK, ANDRES DUANY,  
AND ELIZABETH PLATER-ZYBERK  
*Miami, FL*

## THE KNESSET SPEAKS

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, like Yoram Hazony's book, has a Cassandra-like message: "After merely 50 years of independence, the Jews of Israel are tired of the Zionist vision: a Jewish state" ("The Collapse of Zionism," May 29). Krauthammer, like Hazony, bases this apocalyptic specter on two phenomena: One is Israel's readiness to give up strategically important territories and reduce the size of the small and vulnerable state in return for paper peace; the other is the new spirit of post-Zionism and multicultur-

alism which is prevalent among Israeli academics and men of letters who openly seek to put an end to the Zionist concept of a Jewish state.

With all due respect, I beg to differ with both Krauthammer and Hazony. The two issues they deal with are totally different. The Oslo process saved Israel, at the very last minute, from losing its character as both Jewish and democratic. Retaining control over close to 3 million rebellious Palestinians would have forced Israel to choose between two impossible options: enfranchise the Palestinians and turn the Knesset into a bi-national chamber, or disenfranchise them by continuing a military operation which all democratic nations—and a growing number of Israelis—could not stomach.

By giving up the control over another people who hate everything Israeli and who are ready to fight Israel tooth and nail, Israel is closer to fulfilling the aspirations of its founders: to be both Jewish and democratic, to be a home to a homeless people, while treating minorities the way Jews sought to be treated when they lived as a minority.

Furthermore, Israel's power and might should not be measured solely by territory. Begin's peace treaty with Egypt removed from Israel a territory "three times the size of Israel" in return for a "cold and hostile peace," as Krauthammer rightly points out. However, it gave Israel a quiet southern border and facilitated a drastic cut in the defense budget. Thanks to these cuts, Israel entered into a period of rapid economic growth that is the envy of many richer countries and which left the Arab world lagging far behind.

Similarly, the unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon—admittedly a calculated risk—is not a sign of defeatism or an indication of weakness; it is rather a legitimate step, which seeks to achieve a tactical change in the defense of Israel's northern border, replacing a military presence inside Lebanon with threats of retaliation in case of cross-border attacks against Israel.

Actually, Israel's territorial contraction is not a reliable measure of its power. Israel's status as a technological

# Correspondence

powerhouse, its newly regained status in the European Union, the renewed rise in exports, the re-equipment of the Israeli Defense Force—all of these are much more indicative of Israel's growing power than the lands it gave up and over which it could not, in the long run, retain its sovereignty or control.

The other reason for Krauthammer's pessimism is well founded. Indeed, the post-, or rather anti-Zionist trend in Israeli academic circles is stunning in its propagandist zeal and its similarity to the former Soviet agitprop.

But this new fashion, politically correct in the rarified circles of the "new historians," has not succeeded in shaking the belief of Israelis of their right to live in a Jewish state. Its main contribution to Israel's politics is to weaken the influence of academics and to discredit the left, which is willy-nilly associated with these so-called leftist thinkers.

Proof of this weakness is the fact that despite some of the post-Zionists' support of Hadash—the Arab Communist party—it got only a handful of Jewish votes.

There are no visible signs that Israel is becoming weaker. Its population, including a substantial stream of new immigrants, is growing by leaps and bounds. Already a majority of Jewish children live in Israel, soon a majority of Jews will be living in the Jewish state—a feat undreamt of by the state's founders. The number of volunteers to the army's crack units is growing from year to year.

Perhaps the greatest victory of Zionism, which started only 100 years ago as an endeavor of a few strange visionaries, is to be found in the fact or the accusation that many Russians are forging documents—even studying Yiddish surreptitiously—in order to qualify for the

right of Return and immigrate to the Jewish homeland.

AMNON RUBINSTEIN  
*Member of Knesset  
Chairman, Constitution, Law,  
and Justice Committee  
Jerusalem, Israel*

...

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*Zbigniew Brzezinski*

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## EDITORIAL

# Bush's Missile Defense Triumph

Much to his credit, George W. Bush has made national missile defense the central plank in his foreign policy platform. This may or may not prove to be good for Bush's electoral prospects (though we suspect it will help him). But there is no question that Bush has done the nation a real service by sparking a serious national debate on missile defense.

It is a debate Vice President Al Gore did not want to have, and for good reason. The Clinton administration never wanted to build a national missile defense of any kind. From the day they took office, the president, the vice president, and their top advisers set about cutting funds for the most promising missile defense programs they inherited from the Reagan and Bush years, killing some altogether. They negotiated bad agreements with Moscow on theater missile defense systems, which had the effect of further limiting American capabilities. They downplayed the threat that states like North Korea, Iran, and Iraq could develop intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of striking the United States. And why? Because Clinton and Gore were, and are, devoted apostles of the arms control faith. To them, the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty was sacrosanct.

Then along came the 1998 report of a bipartisan commission headed by former defense secretary Donald Rums-

feld, which demonstrated convincingly to anyone with an open mind that the danger posed by North Korea, Iran, and others was more immediate than the Clinton administration had wanted to admit. This report, quickly followed by North Korean and Iranian missile tests, bolstered the case of congressional Republicans and forced the Clinton

administration to move ahead with some kind of missile defense system, if only to protect its own political flanks and to give Gore some cover in the 2000 campaign.

But we all know how people carry out tasks when they are forced to do so against their will. They carry them out badly. The Clinton administration was dragged kicking and screaming to national missile defense, and it shows.

Clinton officials went about everything backwards. Instead of trying to devise the best possible missile defense system to meet the emerging threat, the administration tried to devise the system that would require the least possible revision to the ABM treaty. Instead of working hard to explain to

the Russians how they might share in the benefits of a robust missile defense system, the administration put forth a proposal designed to be the least troubling to the Russian government. Instead of prompting the administration to develop a plan for helping defend American allies as well as this country, reverence for the ABM treaty led to a con-



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stricted effort that would leave our friends abroad unprotected and alarmed.

Clinton is the master triangulator, but on this vital matter of national security his triangulation has been a disaster. Clinton and Gore wanted to be able to boast that they had both built a missile defense and saved the ABM treaty. But that is a logical contradiction, and even this Houdini of a president hasn't been able to pull it off. As a result of Clinton and Gore's fancy footwork, the nation runs the risk of getting a bad missile defense system and angry allies.

There is a good chance no one would have known quite how shoddy, duplicitous, and fundamentally inadequate was the Clinton-Gore approach had Bush not set forth his own, far more coherent position on missile defense. Bush's plan calls for a comprehensive and robust missile defense system. It would protect American allies as well as American territory. It would employ the most promising technologies, regardless of whether they comply with the antiquated ABM treaty. Indeed, Bush declares that he will not allow U.S. security to be held hostage to a treaty so outdated that even its author, Henry Kissinger, believes it should now be scrapped. Bush has also offered to share missile defense technologies with the Russians, something first proposed by Ronald Reagan and already in the works during his father's administration.

Ever since Bush laid out his proposal, President Clinton has been scrambling to keep up. During his recent trip to Europe, Clinton was forced to agree with Bush that the allies should be protected. He was forced to accept the idea that some technology might be shared with the Russians. And ever since Bush offered his own proposal, just about every expert on missile defense has agreed that, whatever else may be true, Clinton's planned deployment is probably the least desirable.

In other words, Bush is winning this debate hands down. While Clinton has been endorsing key elements of Bush's plan, poor Al Gore has been left mumbling lengthily and incoherently about "Star Wars" and the wonderful ABM treaty. This has made for a useful contrast: Bush as Ronald Reagan; Gore as Frances FitzGerald.

But there's far more at stake here than politics. Whether the United States can deploy a robust and effective missile defense system in the next few years will affect the role we play in the world in the decades to come. A vulnerable United States could retreat into isolation or, at the very least, become an unreliable ally. A well-defended United States, capable of extending protection to friends and allies around the world, can be the pillar of international security.

On many issues, a large number of voters seem to have a hard time distinguishing Bush from Gore. National missile defense is one area where the differences are stark. And it just happens to be one of the most important issues facing us this November.

—Robert Kagan, for the Editors

# Pat Buchanan Loses a Press Secretary

The strange hiring and firing of Neil Bernstein.

BY TUCKER CARLSON

**P**AT BUCHANAN likes to fight. But only on TV. Off the air, the bellicose talk-show-host-turned-third-party-presidential-candidate can be surprisingly meek, even timid, the sort of person who structures his life to avoid the mildest confrontation. This spring, Buchanan was booked for a live interview on *Fox News Sunday*. The day before the show, Buchanan learned that John McCain was scheduled to appear on the show as well. This presented a problem for Buchanan. Shortly before, McCain had attacked Buchanan's most recent book, *A Republic, Not an Empire*, for its depiction of Nazi Germany as the victim of American aggression. Buchanan didn't want to have to face McCain in the studio. So he came as late as possible, in the hope that McCain would be gone when he arrived. By the time Buchanan finally showed up, producers were panicked. "Where's Pat? Where's Pat?" barked one of them frantically.

Then there was the time Buchanan arrived early for an appearance on MSNBC. Rather than wait in the catered comfort of the green room, Buchanan drove around side streets on Capitol Hill until just before air time. Why would he do that? Because he feared running into Chris Matthews in the hallway. Matthews, it

turns out, had also criticized Buchanan's book.

You can learn a lot about Pat

Neil Bernstein

Buchanan by talking to his campaign staff, particularly the ones who have quit or been fired. There are many to choose from. "The turnover at the Buchanan campaign is worse than that at Burger King," says Neil Bernstein, who until recently was Buchanan's press secretary. Bernstein was dismissed on June 9 after nine months on the job. He's still not sure why he was fired. Talking to him, you get the sense that working on the Buchanan campaign must be a bewildering experience. But at least you leave with good stories.

Bernstein, who is 33, grew up in suburban Maryland, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, then came to Washington to become a talk radio producer. In 1996, he went back to school to get a law degree. By last summer, he was living in New York and planning to take the bar exam. One day, while flipping through a talk radio trade magazine, Bernstein saw a listing of the fax numbers of various presidential campaigns. As a "lark," he says, he sent résumés to almost all of them, including Bill Bradley's. The Buchanan campaign called back. Bernstein decided to delay the bar and return to Washington.

Within days Neil Bernstein was Pat Buchanan's press secretary. From the beginning it was an odd fit. For one thing, Bernstein doesn't share Buchanan's views on a number of significant issues, beginning with abortion and homosexuality. (Bernstein says he has "no opinion" on either topic.) For another, Bernstein is Jewish.

This fact put him in a fundamentally uncomfortable position. Pat Buchanan has written and said a number of things that are widely understood to be hostile to Jews and to Israel. (Which, a cynic might conclude, could be one of the reasons he was interested in hiring Bernstein in the first place.) Bernstein doesn't think Buchanan is a bigot. Bernstein's parents aren't so sure. They weren't impressed by their son's new job. "They had a problem with it," Bernstein says. "Absolutely."

So did many of Bernstein's friends.



Illustration by Drew Friedman

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



("Gee, what a surprise," one of them e-mailed him after Bernstein was fired, "the Buchanan campaign making the Jew the scapegoat.") Bernstein received menacing anonymous phone calls at work. At some point, he concluded there was a chance that someone might become angry enough to shoot him. He met with Buchanan to discuss the possibility. "I told him I did not want to be an on-camera spokesman for the campaign," Bernstein says. "I told him I did not want to place myself in danger from groups like the JDL." Buchanan's response? "He totally understood that—totally understood."

According to Bernstein, Pat Buchanan is an understanding guy. A bit of a loner, Buchanan, when he's not traveling, prefers to stay home all day by himself reading. During Bernstein's nine months on the job, the candidate made only three appearances at headquarters. Senior staff meetings were held at his house. Once, he confided to Bernstein that he didn't like going to the office when there were other people around. In Bernstein's telling, Buchanan comes off as flaccid and shy, a man for whom all the talk of pitchforks and culture war is more a Walter Mitty fantasy than a political platform.

And then there is Bay. Bay Buchanan is Pat Buchanan's sister. She runs her brother's campaigns. She is not shy or flaccid. She is, according to Neil Bernstein (and others), a monster—a paranoid, emotionally unstable incompetent who flies into rages for no apparent reason and frequently fires people. Like Neil Bernstein. After he was canned, Bernstein says he called Buchanan for an explanation. Buchanan didn't have one, though according to Bernstein he was very apologetic: "I told him that Bay fired me, and he said, 'Yeah, she told me she was going to do that. I don't understand.'" Bernstein says Buchanan sounded sad.

Bay, by contrast, was rarely sad, Bernstein says. Just enraged. And suspicious. Bernstein says that Bay had an unusually hostile attitude toward reporters, most of whom she viewed

as "enemies." Journalists were not invited to the office. Staff members were actively discouraged from talking to them if they did come. (Not that many could find the place; there is no sign in the lobby of the building to indicate that Buchanan 2000 maintains an office there.) Though he was officially the press secretary, Bernstein says he was all but forbidden by Bay to be quoted by reporters, or to give them any but the most useless information.

It sounds like a thankless job, and it was probably inevitable that Bernstein's tenure at the Buchanan campaign would not end on a perky note. Bernstein says he was fired for trying to bring innovation and fresh thinking to the campaign. For instance, he wanted Buchanan to appear, preferably with his elderly cat, the Gipper, on *The Late Show with David Letterman*. He also had a plan—a far-fetched one, he admits—for winning the White House: "In 2004 you get Reform party congressmen elected in the states that have only one, two, or three electoral votes. You get control of the House, and in theory the Reform party candidate could win."

The rest of the senior staff at Buchanan 2000 weren't impressed by Bernstein's theories. "I've offered up all of these ideas, thinking outside the box," Bernstein says, sounding frustrated. Every time, they were "shot down by all these people who have no creativity, no imagination." Buchanan himself, Bernstein says, was receptive to creative, imaginative thinking. And that, he explains, was part of the problem. "I was becoming too influential. Pat was listening to me too much."

Bernstein's former employers, not surprisingly, have a different explanation for his departure. The campaign's official position seems to be that Bernstein didn't return press calls quickly enough. Off the record, a senior Buchanan staffer accuses Bernstein of a pattern of unacceptable behavior toward female reporters, including calling them at home after work. Several reporters and their superiors complained to the campaign

about Bernstein, the staffer says. Ultimately it was journalists who "basically demanded" that he be fired.

Reached at the hotel in suburban Virginia where he is still living, Bernstein sounds genuinely surprised by the claims the campaign has made about him. "This is the first I've heard of this," he sputters. Yes, he says, there was one female journalist who became irritated when he called her at home. But for the most part, reporters, male and female, welcomed his efforts to get back to them, even at night. Maybe, Bernstein says, his co-workers on the campaign misunderstood what he was doing. "I don't mind telling you there are a lot of uptight people around the office."

Bernstein calls back a short while later. He's angry. Now that I think about it, he says, there's a certain irony in being accused of sexual harassment by the Buchanan campaign. In fact, he claims, it was other male members of the staff who had trouble relating professionally to women. According to Bernstein, almost every man in the office made sexually derogatory remarks about one attractive female journalist who was covering the campaign. "At least 9 guys have made gratuitously rude comments about her," he says. "Actually, I could name 11 names. They crossed the line."

Come to think of it, Bernstein says, calling back again, Pat Buchanan didn't frown on his staff dating journalists. Once he tried to facilitate it: "There was a point about two months ago when Pat wanted to set me up with a former producer of his. He encouraged me to call her. I did and we talked on the phone."

It's hard to know what to make of any of this. Bernstein himself doesn't seem sure. For now, he is in his hotel room writing e-mails and trying to figure out what to do next. Apart from going on unemployment, Bernstein says he sees two obvious options. He could take the bar and become a talk radio agent. Or he could continue to work as a press secretary in some other branch of the Reform party. He has heard there are openings. ♦

# Hafez al-Assad, Murderer

There is no reason to shed tears for the late Syrian dictator. **BY JESSE HELMS**

**H**AFEZ AL-ASSAD was not a diplomat, he was not a peace-maker, he was not a great leader. He was a murderer. In his three decades in power, the Syrian dictator terrorized his own nation, the people of Lebanon, and countless others.

President Clinton bowed his head and bit his lower lip upon receiving the news of Assad's death; it almost seemed that a tear might creep down his cheek. And, in a sign of misplaced respect, the president sent Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to represent him at Assad's funeral. Albright herself eulogized Assad as a "major figure" and expressed sadness at his passing.

There is no justification for honoring a man like Assad. He is a leader on a par in cruelty with Saddam Hussein. In 1982, after a minor rebellion broke out in the city of Hama, Assad sent in his troops (under the command of his brother) and brutally murdered 20,000 innocent people. The Syrian people live in fear, afraid to speak out, afraid to demand basic human rights and political freedoms. Assad, in short, was a man to be reviled.

Yes, it is true that rural Syria now has electricity, and that under the Assad regime the Syrian people have not been troubled by successive coups. But the Syrian people also live under the thumb of no less than 15 internal "security" agencies, which regulate their lives and suppress their rights to free speech and free association. Fax machines are heavily regulated; cellular communications and

the Internet are reserved for a few chosen elites.

Assad left the Syrian people impoverished because he feared economic freedom would undermine his dictatorship. Small businesses can barely operate because there is no private banking. A nation known for its merchant class is mired in deep poverty. Small things that make daily life bear-



able—decent roads, buildings, and communications—are nonexistent.

There is also the pathetic tale of Lebanon. Invited in by Lebanon's Christian leadership in 1976, Assad quickly turned on his hosts. Syrian troops still occupy Lebanon 24 years later. The Lebanese people are cowed by decades of Syrian sponsored communal wars; Lebanese leaders are bereft of national pride to the point that they predicate their own peace and security with Israel on an Israeli withdrawal from the once-Syrian Golan Heights!

And what of Assad's celebrated

commitment to peace—his "strategic choice" in the words of President Clinton and the secretary of state? Who is this man of peace? He is a state sponsor of terrorism, who went to his grave with the blood of Americans on his hands.

Assad was almost certainly involved in the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983, which left 241 American servicemen dead. He supported Palestinian terrorists, Kurdish terrorists, Irish terrorists, and Japanese terrorists. Syria is to this day the main conduit through which the odious Hezbollah gets its weapons.

Notwithstanding the continued operations of Hezbollah; notwithstanding the continued sanctuary Assad provided for rejectionist Palestinian terrorist groups in Damascus; notwithstanding Syria's continued intransigence on peace in the face of almost unimaginable concessions by the government of Israel, the Clinton administration continued to swear by Assad. The fact that Assad chose a meeting with President Clinton earlier this year to reject yet another offer of peace with Israel—a slap in the face to the U.S. government—seems not to faze administration officials one bit.

Assad is dead, and his son Bashar has been installed (for the moment) as the new Syrian dictator. The Russians, once Syria's best ally, did not send a government representative to his funeral; nor did the Chinese, Syria's main arms supplier. But for the funeral of this state sponsor of terrorism, this murderer, President Clinton sent his secretary of state. For shame.

Rather than bowing before Assad's casket, the United States should be delivering a clear message of solidarity to the people of Syria: You did not deserve a dictator like Assad. You deserve peace with your neighbor, Israel. You deserve the freedom to hold elections, and to choose your own leaders. You deserve a better life. Now is the time to grab it. We stand with you in the hope that the end of Assad will mean the beginning of freedom for Syria. ♦

*Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) is chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations.*

# New Troubles for New Labour

Maybe Tony Blair should have stayed on paternity leave. **BY ADRIAN WOOLDRIDGE**

THE BRITISH have a joke about the curse of *Hello!*, a glossy magazine that specializes in sucking up to international celebrities. No sooner does the latest issue hit newsstands than the “perfect marriage” falls apart or the “brilliant businessman” turns out to be a serial embezzler. Perhaps Americans should start joking about the curse of the *New York Times Magazine*. Ever since it ran a particularly oily profile of Tony Blair, the man who used to be able to walk on water has been falling flat on his face.

Everything ought to be going swimmingly for Blair. He has just become a father for the fourth time, the first sitting prime minister to sire a child in 152 years. The British economy is humming, with an American combination of low inflation, low unemployment, and technological innovation. And the European question—the San Andreas fault of modern British politics—continues to do more harm to the Conservative party than to Blair’s androids.

And yet Blair is suddenly in serious trouble. A June 7 speech to the Women’s Institute that was meant to reintroduce the prime minister to his adoring public, refreshed after two weeks’ paternity leave, collapsed in chaos. The Women’s Institute is the very embodiment of the Middle England that Blair wooed away from the Conservatives in 1997, yet its mem-

bers booed, clapped disruptively, and even walked out in disgust at the prime minister’s blatant attempt to turn their annual meeting into a political rally. Having received nothing but adulation from the public for the past three years, Blair looked on in utter confusion, grinning nervously.



Blair’s comeuppance came after a disastrous fortnight for his party. No sooner had the prime minister disappeared to fulfill his paternal duties than his dour chancellor, Gordon Brown, decided to show off a Labour tactic that had not been seen in years: class warfare. Brown chose to highlight a story about Laura Spence, a student from a comprehensive school, which like an American public school

doesn’t have a competitive admissions process. Spence had been turned down for a place at Oxford but awarded a scholarship at Harvard. For the Edinburgh-educated Brown this provided incontrovertible evidence that Oxford is a bastion of class privilege, a place where port-sodden fogies in tweed jackets and mortarboards spend their time conspiring to do down the working classes.

Brown’s broadside might have been a little more successful if he had done his homework. Laura Spence lost out not to little Lord Fauntleroy but to students with similar backgrounds. (The man who directs admissions at the college she applied to is, it turns out, quite devoted to recruiting more pupils from the state sector.) And Spence’s course at Harvard (biochemistry) is much less selective than the one that she was turned down for at Oxford (pre-med).

Brown’s argument also reminded the public of two rather unfortunate facts. The first is that state-school pupils find it so difficult to get into Oxbridge because past Labour governments—and their fellow travelers in the education establishment—have conducted a relentless war on learning standards, abolishing the grammar schools, which, thanks to competitive admissions, were able to focus on getting lads-o-parts into Oxbridge. The second is that the Labour party used to be synonymous with the “politics of envy” that gave Britain a top tax rate of 98 percent, the worst industrial relations record in Europe, and a sclerotic economy.

The Oxbridge debate had another unfortunate consequence for New Labour. It undermined the party’s claim that its lawmakers are mere tribunes of the people, classless, selfless, and motivated by nothing other than the common good. Nobody was louder in her condemnation of Oxford’s privileged ways than Baroness Jay, the leader of the House of Lords. But it turns out that the baroness not only went to private school and Oxford herself, she also did her best to make sure that her children followed in her footsteps.

*Adrian Wooldridge is the author, with John Micklethwait, of A Future Perfect: The Challenge and Hidden Promise of Globalization (Crown Business). He is a Washington-based correspondent for the Economist.*



Her credentials as head of the new “classless” House of Lords are entirely suspect: The daughter of a Labour prime minister, James Callaghan, she married the son of another Labour grandee, Douglas Jay. Although her husband was merely a journalist, Daddy Callaghan, in a major scandal, made him British ambassador to the United States. Thus, Baroness Jay, future defender of the people, enjoyed a diverting few years in Washington, as the wife of an ambassador and, incidentally, lover of Carl Bernstein.

One reason for Labour’s problems

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is a good old battle for power. Gordon Brown has always coveted Tony’s crown, and, in launching a jihad against exclusive private schools and Oxford, he was also venting his resentments against the Oxford-educated Blair. Brown and Blair head the two wings of New Labour. They have their own sets of courtiers, their own spin doctors, and, most important, their own visions of Labour’s future, with Brown’s well to the left of Blair’s. The Tory party was destroyed by a conflict between Lady Thatcher and other Tory grandees, notably Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson. The Oxford spat was yet another reminder that New Labour could suffer a similar fate.

There are deeper problems, too. After the longest honeymoon in British history, the people are beginning to get restive. The Labour party has failed to deliver the revolutionary improvement in public services that it promised while in opposition. State schools remain hopelessly inferior to their private equivalents—a fact that Brown unwittingly advertised in his rant against Oxford. The National Health Service hobbles from crisis to crisis. The London Underground is a foretaste of hell. And the sorts of urban blight that have visibly diminished in New York City—aggressive beggars, wanton littering, beer-belching yobs—are visibly flourishing in London.

New Labour’s bigger plans are also falling apart. Blair had hoped that constitutional reform would be his government’s equivalent of privatization—the policy that would provide the government with a radical edge and an expanding constituency. But so far it has been a dreadful flop.

It has flopped partly because Blair has failed to grasp the elementary point that giving away power means that you no longer have it yourself. After supporting the creation of a mayoralty of London, he was very upset when it became clear one of his cronies wouldn’t be elected to it. He did everything short of fixing the election to prevent Ken Livingstone, an old leftist, from winning. (Red Ken

is now installed in office.) But Labour has flopped, more fundamentally, because it has spawned parliaments in Scotland and Wales, populated by well-paid windbags, that have singularly failed to capture the public imagination. One radio station discovered that the audience for its program about the Welsh parliament had shrunk to zero.

On top of all that, the new Millennium Dome, a gigantic theme park-cum-national monument in Greenwich, has turned out to be a money-eating disaster. Blair boasted that the dome was the physical expression of the spirit of New Labour—sleek, modern, yet inclusive. We were meant to marvel at the grandeur and ambition of the thing, yet at the same time rush to take our kids there for an amusing day out. But it is a commercial flop, kept alive only by huge infusions of public money. And, with its kitsch contents, shoddy displays, and underlying assumption that the purpose of a thousand years of British history was to produce New Labour, it has come to symbolize the hollowness of the current administration.

This is not to say that Blair is likely to lose the next election. The Tories are still in deep trouble, their last few years in power a byword for national calamity and their current leader, William Hague, widely regarded as an aging boy wonder who spent his youth speaking at Tory party conferences rather than chasing girls. Blair has one of the world’s most formidable media-management machines at his disposal. And there is still a great swath of issues—most notably fox hunting, an anti-elitist issue that is very powerful among Labour’s supporters—that Blair can use not just to motivate the Labour heartland but also to mobilize the metropolitan swing voters who put him into power.

Yet something is happening in Britain, albeit gradually. Blair is losing his air of invincibility. And his party is increasingly looking like a bunch of chancers who, having ditched their ideology, are held together by nothing more than the baubles of office. ♦

# This Court Would Be Criminal

Congressional Republicans' just war on the International Criminal Court. **BY JEREMY RABKIN**

**A**T UNITED NATIONS headquarters in New York last week, diplomats from around the world were trying to work out remaining details for the proposed International Criminal Court. U.S. ambassador David Scheffer tried to persuade other nations to include, among these details, some assurance that no member of a U.S. peacekeeping force would ever find himself in the dock before the ICC.

Meanwhile, at the Capitol in Washington, Republican congressional leaders had run out of patience with these negotiations. A bill submitted simultaneously in the House and the Senate last week amounted to a declaration of war on the new ICC. The bill's co-sponsors included the majority leadership in both houses and the chairmen of the relevant standing committees in both houses. Naturally, the Clinton administration complained that it was irresponsible to introduce such a proposal in the midst of delicate international negotiations. But the Republican leaders have done the country a great favor—and the rest of the world, too.

The Statute of the International Criminal Court, drafted at a U.N. conference in Rome in the summer of 1998, would give the court broadly defined jurisdiction over perpetrators of “genocide” and “crimes against humanity” as well as “war crimes” and the crime of international “aggression.” A permanent

independent prosecutor would be authorized to indict any perpetrator of these crimes who is a national of a state that has ratified the Rome statute—or any perpetrator whose victims are nationals of a ratifying state. Bowing to fierce opposition from the Pentagon, the Clinton administration announced at Rome that it could not sign the ICC charter with such open-ended provisions. U.S. negotiators have been struggling ever since to insert some mechanism that would prevent the prose-

cutor from reaching U.S. servicemen operating on the territory of a country that has ratified the ICC statute.

Now, it is rather late in the day to charge the Republicans with irresponsible meddling. “We have stayed out of the administration’s way for two years,” says Marc Thiessen, spokesman for chairman Jesse Helms of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. “For all that time, the Europeans have simply been stringing the Clinton administration along. They are unalterably opposed to any exemptions for American servicemen. And they don’t believe they need to make such concessions, because they are convinced the Clinton administration won’t really oppose this treaty, in any case.”

So the Republican bill takes the lead in registering American opposition. The “American Servicemen’s Protection Act” would prohibit any court in the United States from cooperating with efforts to extradite

*Jeremy Rabkin teaches constitutional law and international law at Cornell University. He recently testified on this topic before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.*

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anyone to the ICC and would prohibit U.S. intelligence agencies from sharing information with the ICC. More than that, it would cut off financial aid and military assistance to any country that does ratify the Rome statute (though the bill makes an exception here for "NATO allies" and other "major allies"). As an ultimate weapon, it provides advance authorization to the president to take "all appropriate measures"—not including the payment of bribes but clearly including military measures—to secure the release of any American held for trial by the ICC. It also authorizes this rescue service for NATO allies and other "major allies." (Israelis, in particular, may need this service.) In the absence of clear exemptions for U.S. peacekeeping forces, says Thiessen, "our aim with this bill is to isolate the ICC and then to kill it."

We should all hope they kill it. The ICC would be a pernicious institution even if some technical remedy were found to keep it away from U.S. servicemen. The Pinochet case guarantees that. The former Chilean president was arrested by British authorities less than three months after the Rome conference that launched the ICC charter. The British ultimately allowed Pinochet to return to Chile on the excuse that he was too sick to stand trial. But not before judges in the House of Lords, Britain's highest court, had confirmed that it would be legally proper for Britain to try him—and therefore proper to extradite him to Spain, where an activist magistrate was very keen to try him—for "torture" inflicted on Chilean nationals, on Chilean territory, by the internationally recognized government of Chile, during the period when Pinochet was head of state in that government.

The Pinochet precedent thus invites every country in the world to put on trial any official of any state it can get its hands on. The establishment of a permanent international criminal tribunal will only add new credibility to such ventures. The very preamble of the Rome statute

admonishes that it is "the duty of every state to exercise its criminal jurisdiction over those responsible for international crimes." And the treaty does not limit this admonition to countries trying their own nationals. So the ICC could build up an influential body of precedents and then leave it to activist prosecutors in national courts to get around any technical restrictions on the ICC's own reach.

On the other hand, the world would lose almost nothing of real value if the ICC were crippled at birth. Advocates of this proposal constantly talk about the need to bring outlaws like Saddam Hussein to justice. But before you can try Saddam Hussein, you have to arrest him. Whether the Bush administration was right or wrong to leave Saddam safely in power in Baghdad, the absence of an international court was surely not one of the major factors in this decision. There is at present a special international tribunal for Yugoslavia which actually did issue an indictment of Milosevic. It doesn't seem to have persuaded him to turn himself in nor persuaded NATO to go fetch him.

The Yugoslav tribunal was established by the Security Council in 1994 at the initiative of the U.S. ambassador to the U.N.—none other than Madeleine Albright. It was a classic Clinton-era policy straddle. We couldn't decide whether to commit serious force to protect civilians in Bosnia, so we established a war crimes tribunal to show our seriousness. Of course, it showed the opposite. In Rwanda, the Clinton administration was very clear that it did not want any U.N. forces getting tangled up in the upheaval that began in 1994. So the world sat on its hands while the Hutu government perpetrated the slaughter of nearly a million Tutsi civilians—from infants to grandmothers, most of them hacked to death with the most primitive weapons. Afterwards, to show how concerned we were about this flagrant disregard for the international convention against genocide, we sent

in . . . lawyers, with a mandate to establish a second ad hoc international tribunal.

The Rome statute was an effort to regularize and institutionalize these Clinton-sponsored ventures in international justice. But the ICC has no police, let alone an army. It will have to depend on the cooperation of governments. How much will it get? Certainly, we shouldn't expect any country to arrest a bloodstained official from China or any other power that might have the means and the disposition to strike back. But we can't expect the most murderous regimes to offer up indicted defendants of their own accord, either. At best, we can expect the ICC to preside over a handful of carefully arranged . . . well, show trials.

But isn't this at least a valuable symbol of the world's concern? As a matter of fact, the symbolism may be the very worst aspect of the ICC. At the heart of the ICC statute is an independent prosecutor, accountable to no one. He is empowered to do justice as he sees it. If he thinks a local trial in national courts has been inadequate, he is authorized to indict a human rights abuser and demand a new international trial. If he thinks a local pardon or amnesty was improper, he can ignore it. What this authority "symbolizes" is the theory that all nations, including constitutional democracies, should surrender their most sensitive internal decisions about justice and order to ultimate international control.

The real question is not whether the Clinton team can still negotiate a technical fix for this "symbol" in order to safeguard American servicemen. The question is why this administration ever wanted to launch such a spore of world government into the unpredictable crosswinds of contemporary international politics. Secretary of State Albright has said we will be "a good neighbor to the ICC," even if we can't join it. We ought to be trying to stop it from taking root. Senator Helms and his Republican co-sponsors have made a good start. ♦



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# The New Vermont: Give It to Canada!

*The sad decline of the Green Mountain state.*

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BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

**B**efore I moved to Vermont in the late 1970s, everything I knew about the state could be summed up in three names: Ethan Allen, Calvin Coolidge, and George Aiken.

Allen and his Green Mountain Boys were fighting the Revolution years before the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord. Their fight was with the landed nobles who claimed the disputed land to the east of the Hudson known as the New Hampshire Grants, and they weren't gentle. Ethan and his boys were tough American yeomen who planned their actions in saloons. After the war got started in earnest, they captured Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain. According to legend, Allen demanded the British surrender "In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." You have to love a man like that.

Coolidge, of course, was the last 19th-century president, though he served in the 1920s. Afternoons, he napped, and he was famously laconic. Some wit—Dorothy Parker, perhaps—is supposed to have remarked, when informed that Coolidge had died, "How could they tell?" His reticence and his rectitude seem the stuff of an impossible dream, these days. A president given to silences, imagine.

George Aiken was a U.S. senator for years and years. He was a patriot who believed in balanced budgets and limited government when those were not even heretical ideas but more like quaint superstitions. His was a Yankee frugality carried almost to the point of caricature. But it was also a deeply moral posture: If you want something, you have to be willing to pay for it.

Six months after I arrived in Vermont, I went to my first town meeting. I was already sold on the place, but the town meeting sealed the deal. The voters actually sat

in a room (the school gym) and argued over the budget and taxes and road building and whether we needed to continue to pay bounties for porcupines. Debate was sometimes robust and always sincere. Town meeting was serious business. This was how Vermonters governed themselves . . . a page right out of Tocqueville:

The New Englander is attached to his township because it is strong and independent; he has an interest in it because he shares in its management; . . . he learns to rule society; he gets to know those formalities without which freedom can advance only through revolutions, and becoming imbued with their spirit, develops a taste for order, understands the harmony of powers, and in the end accumulates clear, practical ideas about the nature of his duties and the extent of his rights.

Strong stuff. But I drank deeply of it. I got myself elected to the school board—which was certainly an education in the "nature of [my] duties"—became a trustee of the local Congregational church, and served a couple of terms as a justice of the peace. I took a robust interest in the life of the town, which was a little out of character. I'd never been much of a joiner and didn't have much taste for committee work. I was moved, I suppose, by the spirit of Vermont.

Though I was not one of them, I felt a kind of kinship with the yeomanry of the state. At the church, on Memorial Day, someone would read the names of all the men from town who had died in the country's wars, and a lot of those names would be familiar. I knew the descendants of the Civil War dead. They were the local electricians, carpenters, plumbers, and mechanics. I hunted deer with them. Did community work with them. Argued with them at school board meetings. I felt that in some way, I was the beneficiary of a tradition they had inherited.

That all seems impossible, and long ago, here in the New Vermont—a state that, alas, attracted not just migrants like myself but seemingly every tie-dyed hippie outcast from up and down the Atlantic Coast. The New

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*Geoffrey Norman last wrote for THE WEEKLY STANDARD about Jimmy Johnson and the thuggishness of pro football.*

Vermont has filled up over the past generation with cranky lefties who were outvoted everywhere else in the country, until they came here and finally found a polity small enough to take over. Small is beautiful, indeed.

**A**mong people who do not live here, the most conspicuous event in the recent evolution of Vermont was the ruling of the state supreme court that opened the door to same-sex marriage. But that decision came as no surprise to those of us who live here. The only wonder was that it took the judges so long to get around to it.

The five supreme court justices are all career government lawyers who couldn't get elected dogcatcher at most town meetings. To get even, they issue arrogant decisions. Three years before the same-sex marriage case, they emasculated town meeting and local control, ruined public education, raised taxes, and created antagonisms and resentments all over the state. Not a bad day's work.

In the days before this ruling, known as the *Brigham* decision (1997), towns were responsible for schools. Which meant they had to raise the money—chiefly through property taxes—to pay for them. Some towns are wealthier than others and could afford better schools.

According to the *Brigham* ruling, this was unconstitutional. The court told the legislature to come up with something new and fair. That something was Act 60, which creates a statewide property tax and school-funding system. The state takes all the money and distributes it equally. Now the rich towns send in much more than they get back, and the poor towns get back much more than they send in. Every school gets about \$5,300 per student from the state. Some towns were spending twice that.

The genius of Act 60 is in the way it treats those towns. If the voters of a town decide that cuts of this order in the school budget are unendurable, and they are willing to tax themselves above the state rate to cover the shortfall, they have to send that money to the state which will send it back to them at a rate that equalizes distribution around the state. The richer the town, the less of the

money it sends into this “shark tank” it gets back. My town would get about one dollar back for every three it sends in. This, after it has already sent in far more than the \$5,300 per student it gets from the state.

Act 60 makes town meeting and local democracy a joke. We still get to vote on bounties for porcupines (which eat trees and prickly unwary dogs). But the big decisions—how much to tax and what to spend for education—get made in Montpelier, the capital, where the teachers' union is the boss hog.

Act 60 was sold by its supporters as a way to improve education. The argument depended on making quality dependent on spending, which is not unfair. As George Aiken believed, if you want something, then you have to

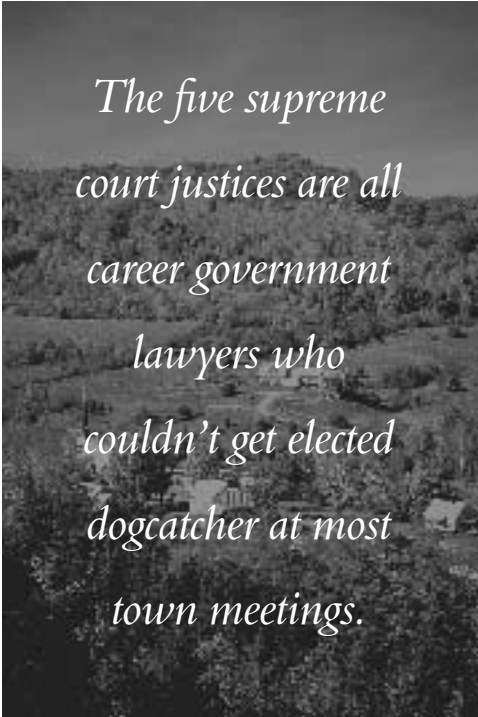
be willing to pay for it. But it was plain that some towns would spend less for education than they had been. Education in those schools, then, would not be improved. To the contrary.

But Act 60 was never as much about education as it was about envy. If it took bringing some schools down to make all schools equal . . . well, then, fine. Some of the bill's most prominent supporters, of course, sent their kids to private schools, so no skin off theirs. Some towns—like the one where I live—attempted to stay out of the shark tank and still keep school budgets at the old level (in our case, about \$9,500 per student) by creating foundations that would raise non-tax money to be donated to the school. Our group of volunteers went around explaining to voters and property

owners why it was in their interest to contribute over and above what the state had already hit them up for. It was a tough sell—even more of a grind, for me, than serving on the school board—but we did meet our goals.

This, of course, inspired the supporters of Act 60 to new punitive legal efforts. They proposed to outlaw foundations like ours. Or to require that we send our foundation contributions to the shark tank for redistribution. So far, they are still at bay.

Meanwhile, the shark tank has been experiencing severe shortfalls—because foundations like ours have, so far, been successful. So poorer towns that had voted increases in their school budgets in anticipation of money from the shark tank were looking at deficits. To bail



*The five supreme  
court justices are all  
career government  
lawyers who  
couldn't get elected  
dogcatcher at most  
town meetings.*

them out, the state put almost \$40 million (real money in a little state like Vermont) into the shark tank from general revenues. This is absolutely contrary to the intent and design of the Act 60 funding contraption. But never mind. We are on the road to some form of equality and everyone knows what you have to do to eggs before you can make an omelet.

The real absurdity of it all, though, is that while Vermont spends relatively lavishly on its schools (consistently among the top 15 states), student performance is mediocre, at best (usually in the bottom half nationally). One contemporary educational innovation that would dovetail nicely with the Vermont tradition of local control is the charter school. Thirty-seven states are experimenting with them, but not Vermont. The teachers' union, which is easily the strongest political force in the state, is opposed. In fact, when it comes to using its muscle, the teachers' union can demonstrate a kind of brutality that is a little breathtaking for a small, rural state. Last year, when a retired Air Force colonel offered to teach a course called "Conflict in the Twentieth Century," without pay, at Williamstown High School, the union filed a grievance to keep the scab out of the classroom.

It seems that in the New Vermont, you may not volunteer either your time or your money to the schools. You will give what you are told to give, take what the state gives back to you, and leave the teaching to the experts who have done such a fine job. Private schools are springing up all over the state.

Self-reliance was the cardinal virtue of the men who fought with Ethan Allen. They homesteaded the Green Mountains to avoid the servitude of share farming, which was the way things were done on the big estates over on the Hudson.

The Green Mountain Boys were prepared to take care of themselves and horsewhip any sheriff, in the pay of nobles, who tried to tell them they couldn't. That kind of spirit dies hard, and it was still alive, if feeble, when I got here. I knew people who figured that if they were strong enough to get out of bed, they couldn't be sick enough to need a doctor. My first doctor—who looked after my infant daughter—did not carry medical liability insurance and explained this to you on your first visit so you could find another doctor if you thought suing would make you better when you got sick. He charged five bucks for an office visit. His degree, by the way, was from Harvard.

Being a little more mainstream than he, I bought some bare bones medical coverage from a company that

specialized in that kind of thing. I figured the high deductible wasn't likely to be a problem. Even a freelance writer could afford a lot of \$5 office visits.

I did not realize, however, that Vermont was in the midst of a health care revolution. The state was on the road to a single-payer system and universal health care, where everyone could afford to have everything and we would all be taken care of no matter what.

My first insurance company got run out of the state for "cherry picking." That is to say: They wouldn't write a policy like mine for everyone who walked through the door. If everyone couldn't have it, then no one could. Which pretty much sums up the prevailing ethos in the Green Mountain state. I tried Blue Cross, which in Vermont is a quasi-governmental entity and just about as user-friendly. After a couple of telephone shouting matches with some of the Blue Cross bureaucrats (good idea for a war: the Green Mountain Boys versus the Blue Cross Bureaucrats), I switched to a company that offered a high deductible combined with a medical savings account—an innovation that actually allows you to make your own medical spending decisions. I was happy with this, so, of course, last year that company was also run out of the state. Ultimately, you will be able to buy insurance only from Blue Cross.

In its quest for a single-payer system the state has run about a dozen insurance companies out of the state, and the three that are still here have jacked up their premiums by as much as 40 percent. As more people are unable to afford health insurance, the costs are shifted to those who can. In Vermont, taxpayers foot the medical bills of kids from families earning \$50,000 a year. The jiggling of the health care books makes the "shark tank" accounting gimmicks of Act 60 look clean and elegant. But what is especially galling is not the political hustle that aims at convincing voters they are being served a free lunch, it is the way in which any notion of individual choice and responsibility is snuffed out because it might be unfair or unequal or something.

If you want to take responsibility for your own health—decide not to smoke, do drugs, slurp 64 oz. Cokes, indulge in unprotected sex, etc., etc.—that is fine with the state. But you will pay the medical bills of those who do. And if insurance gets to be too expensive, then you too can become a ward of the state.

My five dollar doctor has long since left Vermont.

As the state continues to take over and centralize health care and education in Vermont, one hears increasingly about the "health care crisis" and the "crisis in education." No surprise there. And one



finds ways to manage. But what is dispiriting, and cannot be fixed, is the way the old virtues of Vermont are being leached out of the state and its citizens.

The state is a notoriously tough place to do business. Taxes and regulation are the chief culprits. Transportation figures in there, too. New Hampshire has the same topography, but it is booming, especially in the non-polluting high-tech sector where Vermont languishes. Perhaps because programmers are looking for good schools and affordable medical coverage.

Vermont sends three men to Washington. Senators Patrick Leahy and James Jeffords and congressman Bernie Sanders. Leahy is a pure Democrat. Jeffords is a soaking wet Republican. Sanders is an Independent and a Socialist who, when he was mayor of Burlington, liked to travel to Nicaragua to lend support to the Sandinistas. What they all seem most concerned about down in Washington is keeping Vermont's dairy farmers happy. Jeffords is running ads these days showing Vermonters speaking into the camera to thank him for all the good things he has brought back to us from Washington, including a dairy compact scheme that gives New England farmers a subsidy on top of a subsidy. It may actually be good for Vermont, and if you know any of those

farmers, you cannot help but admire them and sympathize with their struggles to stay on the land. Vermont has always been a tough place to make a go of it. Still . . .

The compulsion these days seems to be to find a way to make life easy, and then to get someone else to pay for it. The governor of Vermont is an energetic former doctor named Howard Dean who is as loquacious as Calvin Coolidge was laconic. He is everywhere. Talking. Always talking. About Act 60; about "affordable" health care; about "civil unions" (the secular alternative to same-sex marriage). He is running for reelection, and his coalition of urban exiles, old hippies, teachers, greenies, and various wards of the state will no doubt hold. It is a measure of his odd success that he has been mentioned, now and again, as a running mate for Gore. He would be ideal except that, in so many ways, he is a replica of Gore. Combative, condescending, captive of the teachers.

Vermont has become unmoored from its traditions and is drifting, derelict. The state was not one of the original 13 states and, at first, led by Ethan Allen, refused to join the new republic and argued that it might be better to reunite with Britain. Two centuries later, Vermont feels more and more like a province of Canada. ♦

Roger Kimball  
America's culture  
and Charles Re  
dead ends and  
sound common

architects of  
Susan Sontag,  
wrong turns,  
even rarer,  
al decade.

of the 1960's?  
questions more  
and eloquence."  
William Bennett

William Buckley  
cultural critics.

-Irving Kristol

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# The Civil Truth About “Civil Unions”

*Vermont has legalized quasi-marriage for same-sex couples.  
Will other states be forced to follow?*

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BY DAVID ORGON COOLIDGE

Starting July 1, any two adults not closely related by blood can enter into a “civil union” in Vermont. They must apply for a license and recruit a member of the clergy or a justice of the peace to conduct a ceremony and sign their license, whereupon the town clerk will duly register their union.

If this sounds familiar, it should. It’s marriage by another name. A same-sex couple in a civil union will be all but married under Vermont law. If anyone treats a civil union differently from a marriage, that person will be guilty of discrimination on the basis of marital status. Starting January 1, 2001, all insurance policies offered in Vermont must treat civil unions and marriages identically. It is unclear whether the religious exemption added to the civil unions bill at the last moment will have teeth.

How did this happen? At the time the legislature was crafting this innovation, only 40 percent of Vermonters favored extending the benefits of marriage to same-sex couples. The bill itself was pushed through the legislature in the space of less than two months. Yet its enactment was no chance development.

The long march to legitimize homosexuality in Vermont began 15 years ago, with the formation of the state Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in 1985. The coalition’s annual conferences, along with the lesbian and gay newspaper *Out in the Mountains*, which began publication in 1986, were important in promoting the cause. Their efforts found a receptive audience in the pervasively liberal Vermont political establishment. They first bore legislative fruit with the enactment of a wide-ranging “sexual orientation” anti-discrimination law in 1992.

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*David Orgon Coolidge is director of the Marriage Law Project in Washington, D.C. He testified on the civil unions bill before the judiciary committees of the Vermont House and Senate.*

Around the same time, the Vermont Law School began to hold annual conferences on “Sexual Orientation and the Law,” where gay and lesbian attorneys and activists networked. Also in the early nineties, a number of prominent employers in the state, of which Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream is only the best known, began to offer domestic partnership benefits. The state of Vermont took this step in 1991. The town of Burlington followed in 1993, and the town of Middlebury in 1995.

The second big legal victory for the gay community came in the courts, with significant assistance from Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), a Boston law firm active across New England. In a landmark decision in 1993, the Vermont supreme court held that existing adoption law permitted “second-parent” adoptions by same-sex partners. In 1995, the legislature amended the adoption code to make this explicit (although it did so under the rubric of “unmarried” persons, rather than specifying same-sex partners).

Vermont, of course, was not the only state where the gay lobby was making headway. In Hawaii, attempts to legalize same-sex marriage were foiled when the state legislature voted in April 1997 to put a state constitutional amendment reaffirming traditional marriage on the ballot. The amendment ultimately passed, but in the meantime, on July 22, 1997, three homosexual couples filed suit in Vermont claiming that the “common benefits clause” of the state constitution entitled them to full coverage under the marriage statute. The suit, *Baker v. Vermont*, was announced online jointly by GLAD and the New York-based Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. Lambda had been co-counsel in a similar suit in Hawaii; GLAD became co-counsel in Vermont.

In December 1999, the Vermont supreme court—pointing to the enactment of the anti-discrimination law and the revised adoption code—ruled for the plaintiffs. Under the Vermont constitution, the court held, committed same-sex couples must be given the same legal bene-

fits, protections, and responsibilities as married couples. The court left it to the legislature, however, to decide how to accomplish this.

To grasp what it means to “leave something to the legislature” in Vermont, one has to appreciate certain logistical realities. There are 150 representatives and 30 senators—none of whom, except the Senate president and the speaker of the House, has an office. To reach a legislator, you leave a message with the sergeant at arms or call the legislator at home. Each committee chairman gets a clerk and a committee room, but the typical committee room can hold the committee, one witness, and 5 to 10 chairs. Legislators have no personal staff; for drafting bills, they rely on a pool of staff attorneys, as well as on research and drafts supplied by various lobbies.

Legislators, nonetheless, are accountable to the voters as appointed justices are not—and in the aftermath of the *Baker* decision, polls showed 52 percent of Vermonters disagreed with the court. The governor, Democrat Howard Dean, declared himself “uncomfortable” with same-sex marriage, but “committed” to equal rights; his Commission on Women had recently honored two of the lesbian plaintiffs. Given the climate of opinion, the speaker of the House and president of the Senate—although both were Democrats, and on the record in favor of same-sex marriage—deferred to their judiciary committees to fashion the legislation suggested by the court. Both committees were headed by well-meaning liberals with vice chairmen eager to move the issue forward.

Both committees voted against legalizing same-sex “marriage,” as did the full House. Having thus “taken marriage off the table,” they proceeded to explore the option of same-sex “civil unions.” For most liberals (in both parties) who had dominated state politics for a generation, this new terminology offered the perfect means of complying with the court’s ruling. Conservatives had a much harder task: to stop either the courts or the legislature from going further down the path of mainstreaming homosexuality. As in Hawaii, the only means of doing this was a constitutional amendment.

The House committee held its hearings first, in January and February. Some sessions, at the statehouse, were the usual parade of scheduled speakers; others, held at various locations, were an opportunity for ordinary citizens to speak.

Those testifying in favor of same-sex unions included members of the Dean administration (the commerce secretary assured the committee that civil unions would have no impact on tourism, and the insurance commissioner gave similar assurances on benefits issues), Vermont Law School professors, a plethora of psychiatrists, social workers, and public health personnel, and a representative from Blue Cross-Blue Shield, who said his firm would obey the law. “Progressive” business people chimed in with a newspaper ad in favor of civil unions.

The proponents’ arguments—all of which were present or implicit in the court’s ruling in *Baker*—were of four main types: procedural, factual, moral, and legal.

The procedural claim was that the court had spoken, and the legislature should obey. Some argued that the court was the official interpreter of the constitution, and the legislature should defer as a matter of principle. Others argued pragmatically that if the legislature did not give the court what it demanded, the court (which had taken the unusual step of keeping the case open before it) might do something worse. This was a powerful threat.

The factual claim was that many lesbians and gays in Vermont have committed relationships and are raising children. They work hard, pay taxes, and so forth. Extending marital benefits, protections, and responsibilities to them would strengthen Vermont.

The moral claim was that sexual orientation is irrelevant to marriage, and what people do sexually is purely a private matter that is nobody’s business. The essence of marriage is love, commitment, trust, and forgiveness, as one senator put it. The social institution of marriage is intended to encourage fidelity and family stability.

Finally, the legal argument was that the Vermont constitution is committed to inclusion; that pursuing equality and fighting discrimination are the heart of Vermont’s political tradition.



*For most liberals,  
the new terminology  
of “civil unions”  
offered the perfect  
means of complying  
with the  
court’s ruling.*



The uniformly liberal press repeated these arguments endlessly. The AP reporter assigned to the story, Ross Sneyd, had served on the board of *Out in the Mountains*. Reporters and editorial writers for the *Rutland Herald* and *Burlington Free Press* attacked the Roman Catholic Church and caricatured civil union opponents as bigots.

As the debate unfolded, supporters of civil unions changed their tactics, morphing from liberal reformers advancing the rights of individuals into Burke-quoting conservatives upholding the rule of law. By their account, the people of Vermont had become a tyrannical majority, and the defenders of traditional marriage were radicals who wanted to yield to mob rule.

But what about the opponents of civil unions? Consider their state of organization on December 20, 1999, the day the Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Baker*.

Churches were the primary locus of opposition, but they were not, and did not aspire to be, political players. Nor did the opposition enjoy an organizational base in pre-existing public policy groups. Vermont had no Catholic Conference or family policy council, not even a tiny chapter of some national pro-marriage organization. There were some pro-life groups, and some supporters of school choice, all of them out of favor with the legislature. There was only one state think tank, the Ethan Allen Institute, a critic of judicial activism.

To fill the gap, a secular citizens group, Take It to the People (TIP), had been formed in 1998 in response to the filing of the *Baker* suit. TIP and its sympathizers generated amicus briefs in support of the marriage law. They put up booths at state fairs. And they held their first big fundraising dinner in November 1999—only a month before the court spoke.

Neither TIP nor the churches had a regular presence at the statehouse. As a result, when the legislative session opened in January 2000, legislators and their staffs saw TIP as a total stranger to the process and a sinister intruder. The fact that TIP was calling for a pro-marriage constitutional amendment strained matters further. TIP hired William Shouldice & Associates, a top-notch lob-

bying firm—but it did so only in February, long after the other side had hired the comparable firm of Kimball, Sherman & Ellis.

Despite the odds, TIP and its religious allies mobilized significant opposition to civil unions. They chose articulate spokesmen and turned out large crowds for two rallies at the statehouse. The first of the citizen hearings, held in Montpelier during a snowstorm, drew an estimated 1,200 people, and the second, a week later, drew 1,800, according to the *Burlington Free Press*. A *New York Times* reporter likened the turnout to 90,000 citizens showing up for a rally in Albany.

Twenty-five thousand Vermonters signed petitions in support of a pro-marriage constitutional amendment, and thousands more contacted public officials, an unusu-

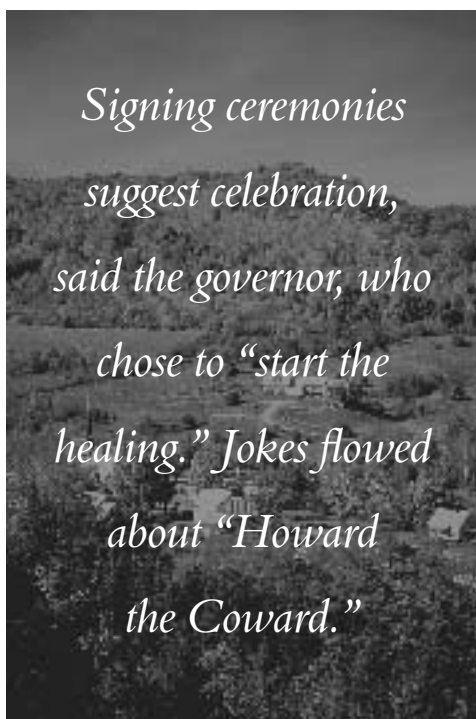
al outpouring in a state with only 600,000 people. Public forums and Vermont Interactive Television hearings were held around the state, and supporters of traditional marriage made a serious showing at these events. The bishop of the Roman Catholic diocese of Burlington, Kenneth Angell, became a symbol of resistance to civil unions. Political leaders courted Bishop Angell, but he stood firm.

This popular mobilization began to be felt in the House of Representatives when a bipartisan Traditional Marriage Caucus was organized with 68 members. Its leaders were Democrat Bobby Starr and Republican George Schiavone. The senior member of the House and chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Democrat Oreste Valsangiacomo, enthusias-

tically supported the caucus, as did the Republican leaders. But by this point the House Judiciary Committee had unanimously endorsed a bill creating civil unions, and on March 2 the bill was reported out.

The speaker was eager to speed the legislation to the floor, but Valsangiacomo insisted that his committee, too, hold hearings. The speaker and judiciary chairman refused, agreeing only to postpone the vote a week while town meetings were held across the state. Some towns had the marriage issue on their agendas. In order not to look blatantly uninterested in the opinions of their constituents, House leaders put off the vote.

On Tuesday, March 7, while the rest of the country



*Signing ceremonies  
suggest celebration,  
said the governor, who  
chose to “start the  
healing.” Jokes flowed  
about “Howard  
the Coward.”*

was caught up in the presidential primaries, Vermonters gathered in town meetings and held impassioned debates. More than 50 towns discussed marriage or same-sex benefits. The results, according to the *Rutland Herald*: No town supported same-sex “marriage,” and fewer than 10 supported same-sex benefits.

This development—trumpeted by the Traditional Marriage Caucus—shocked the legislature. Nevertheless, the speaker pushed ahead. After two days of floor debate, in which all significant amendments were defeated, the civil unions bill passed the House by a vote of 76 to 69.

The bill moved immediately to the Senate Judiciary Committee, which held hearings for three weeks. Again, there were many witnesses. Under pressure, the committee agreed to allow a pro-marriage constitutional amendment to come to the Senate floor, but its supporters on the committee were unable to agree on how the amendment should be worded, and it went to the floor without the endorsement of the committee. As for the civil unions bill, the committee endorsed the House version with the addition of a token religious exemption and sent it to the Senate floor by a vote of 4 to 2.

During this phase of the debate, TIP prepared four television ads. The two top stations, WCAX-3 and WPTZ-5, both refused to air them, and they were shown only on two minor cable channels.

Once the amendment and bill arrived on the floor, many senators deplored the speed of the process, but only a few were willing to speak out against civil unions. The *New York Times* noted that “no one spoke forcefully against civil unions.” The same could not be said of civil unions’ supporters. In a flight of anti-populist liberal rhetoric, majority leader Richard McCormack intoned, “Shouldn’t the majority rule? Not in America!” The opponents of civil unions were “theocrats,” he said, who, if they could, would exile Jews and excommunicate Episcopalians. Senate president pro tem Peter Shumlin called the vote “a choice between bigotry and belonging, between callousness and compassion.”

Senate leaders only pretended to give a pro-marriage constitutional amendment a chance. First they brought to the floor an amendment defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman but not overruling *Baker*; this failed 13 to 17, falling far short of the two-thirds needed. Then they brought to the floor an amendment affirming traditional marriage and directly overruling *Baker*; a procedural vote to make this the last amendment the Senate would consider passed easily, 27 to 3, as politically vulnerable senators seized the opportunity to “cast a vote for marriage”—while on the substance, this amendment also failed, garnering just 9 votes. As for the civil unions bill, all the Democrats and 2 Republicans voted

yea, for a Senate tally of 19 to 11. The House concurred, 79 to 68.

At 1:30 P.M. on April 26, Governor Dean, without fanfare or photo op and alone with his staff, signed the civil unions bill into law. Only then did his staff summon the sponsors and key players. At Dean’s weekly press conference at 2:00 P.M., they were surprised to learn that he had already signed the bill.

The *Washington Post* online quoted Dean as calling the law “a courageous and powerful statement about who we are in the state of Vermont,” a statement that “speaks to the heart of this state, and certainly to my heart.” He had avoided a public signing ceremony, the governor explained, in order to “start the healing.” Signing ceremonies suggest celebration, he said, and given the bad feelings the issue had aroused, why celebrate? But to some, the maneuver suggested less healing than hiding. The press and the law’s champions were furious. Jokes flowed about “Howard the Coward.”

Since the signing, polls have continued to show opinion divided. An April 2000 Vermont Poll found 51 percent in favor of a pro-marriage constitutional amendment, with 42 percent opposed. Governor Dean, who is up for reelection this year, understands this. So do those who will be working to put new faces in the legislature.

On May 9, the attorneys in *Baker* announced they would drop their suit. The announcement was issued from the GLAD office in Boston by GLAD attorney Mary Bonauto and Vermont attorneys Susan Murray and Beth Robinson. Said Murray, “As much as we think the *Baker* decision required the legislature to include same-sex couples in the marriage laws, we recognize that Vermonters need time to talk, consider the civil union law, and come back together as a state.”

Bonauto was less conciliatory. “We hope some states and private parties will respect civil unions formed in Vermont,” she said. “In other instances, litigation will be necessary to settle the question of whether a civil union or some part of it is valid outside Vermont.” She concluded, “Securing full equality involves a long-term civil rights struggle. It’s time for people in other states to look at the Vermont model and do the same kind of grassroots groundwork so they can pick up where Vermont left off.” Those are fighting words. Expect GLAD to be filing suits throughout New England.

Anyone who still affirms that marriage is the union of a man and a woman, meanwhile, is left asking: Are Vermont’s leaders mired in the past, blindly promoting a sexual revolution about which many Americans have long since had second thoughts—or are they the vanguard, a sign of things to come? ♦

# American Ulysses

## *The Return of General Grant*

By FRANK J. SCATURRO

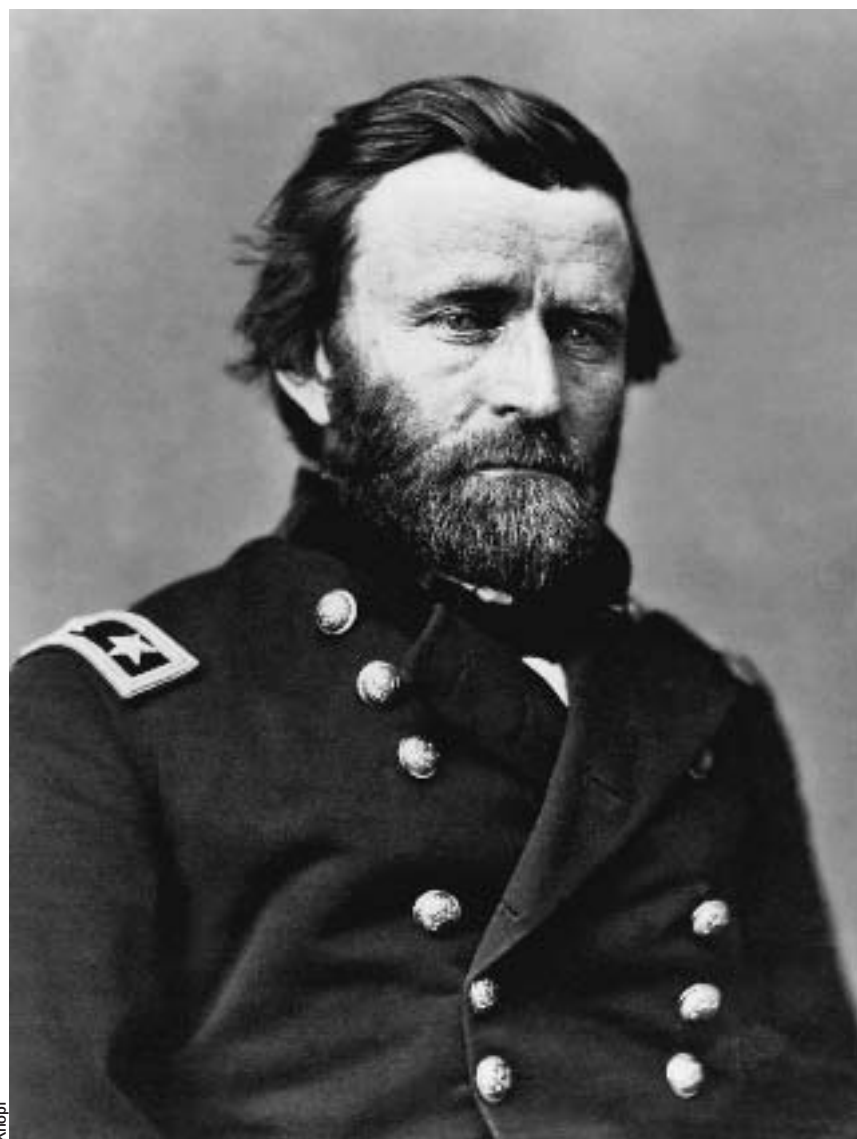
studies covering Grant's entire life are surprisingly recent: William S. McFeely's *Grant: A Biography* (1981) and Geoffrey Perret's *Ulysses S. Grant: Soldier & President* (1997).

With the release of *Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph Over Adversity, 1822-1865*, Brooks D. Simpson now joins this exclusive club: The book is only volume one of a promised two, and by itself, it is almost as long as McFeely's and Perret's biographies.

Curiously, British military historians—like Fuller, James Marshall-Cornwall, and John Keegan—have been far better at recognizing Grant as one of history's great captains than have their American counterparts, who cannot even reach agreement on Grant's ability relative to other Civil War generals. Though Grant played a central role in perhaps the most important event in American history, his reputation in the United States has undergone the opposite of the lionization one might have expected.

The Myth of the Lost Cause, which deified Confederate generals and downplayed the role of slavery in the war, accompanied an odd change in the image of the Union commander. Grant would come to be seen mostly as a drunk or as a butcher of a general who was aided more by an unfair numerical advantage than by any noteworthy mental endowment.

Yet pieces of contradictory evidence revealing the stranger who is the historical Grant have slowly been seeping up in recent years, and Brooks Simp-



Knopf

“One takes up each new biography of Grant,” a reviewer observed, “with the sort of interest with which a physician receives a new treatise on cancer. He is a problem, as yet unsolved, which will probably be solved, and each unread attempt may contain the solution.”

That was back in 1917, though it could have been written today. The twentieth century witnessed a dramatic decline in Ulysses S. Grant's reputation. W.E. Woodward's 1928 *Meet General Grant*, the bestselling Grant biography of its time, was symptomatic of the decline (though the book remains most notorious for its negative depiction of blacks). At the height of the New Deal,

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William B. Hesseltine and Allan Nevins each followed up with a condemnatory study of Grant's presidency.

Many more studies focused on Grant through the end of the Civil War and chose to go no further. The most

**Ulysses S. Grant**  
*Triumph Over Adversity, 1822-1865*  
by Brooks D. Simpson  
Houghton Mifflin, 533 pp., \$35

highly regarded of such works are Lloyd Lewis and Bruce Catton's trilogy, *Captain Sam Grant* (1950), *Grant Moves South* (1960), and *Grant Takes Command* (1969). J.F.C. Fuller's *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant* (1929) topped its rivals in assessing Grant's military performance, but without matching Lewis and Catton's biographical work. The only definitive



son's Grant would be more recognizable to his contemporaries than the figure depicted by most previous biographers. Simpson stands out from his predecessors for having preceded his project with many years of research and publication, including two books and more scholarly articles devoted to Grant.

One conventional exaggeration is that Grant's life amounts to a Horatio Alger story that began in poverty. The truth is that he was born into a family better described as middle class than poor, and he was one of the few in his time to attend college—at West Point, by his father's choice. Information on Grant's early life is not particularly abundant; he seems in youth to have been relatively shy and inconspicuous, but generally agreeable. He was a great horseman from an early age, particularly resourceful with a horse and wagon, and his cargo-hauling feats may reflect something of an engineering prodigy. At West Point, he excelled in mathematics but graduated with the very ordinary class rank of twenty-one out of thirty-nine—an oft-cited nugget that overlooks that the class once numbered seventy-seven.

Between West Point and his next great military training ground, the Mexican War, occurred a courtship with and engagement to Julia Dent, the sister of a West Point roommate. Under no subsequent conditions of war or peace would his devotion to his wife (and later four children) lessen. Woven into Simpson's narrative of Grant's career is this enduringly affectionate relationship, the epistolary evidence for which is ample.

Marriage would have to wait for the Mexican War, however. Grant fought in every battle except Buena Vista and learned from his commanding generals, Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott, lessons that would come to guide him in later years. He displayed courage on the battlefield and proved himself an able quartermaster, an experience not to be undervalued: This was a time in which disease killed more soldiers than bullets, and understanding the logistics of keeping an army supplied was essen-

tial to good generalship—especially for one who would pursue an offensive strategy and have to frequently change supply bases.

Another trait Grant showed was an ability to analyze cogently and speak lucidly of past military campaigns and the grave political questions that were leading him to his appointment with destiny. This characteristic is easy to miss in the thicket of other occupations that he pursued to support his family after the Mexican War. During



2nd Lt. Grant, c. 1843

the 1850s, various attempts at farming failed, both while he was in the peacetime army and (with more mixed results) after he resigned in 1854 to rejoin his family near St. Louis. His lack of business sense combined with bad luck, particularly when the Panic of 1857 struck. Grant's decision to go into the real estate business with his wife's cousin may have put him even more out of his element. He had always been a trusting and good-natured man, more inclined to repay his loans than to collect from others, and his level of success in a position that included rent and debt collection was what one might expect. The eve of the Civil War

found him in another job, working as a clerk in his father's leather and hardware store in Galena, Illinois.

And what about Grant's drinking? The only period in which we can surmise (though the evidence is sketchy) that Grant might have regularly drunk too much is during some portion of the under two years he spent on the Pacific Coast before resigning from the army. Even during this period, it is clearer that Grant's hardships consisted of failure to make money, pain (which alcohol was thought to remedy), and separation from a family that included a son he had never met. As for the Civil War period, Simpson recounts each of the handful of times Grant was alleged to have been drunk, only to show the unreliability of each claim. Simpson does not quite relegate the drinking issue to the status of a footnote in Grant's story, but he paves the way for future historians to do so.

The unassuming Grant was noted for his aversion to pomp and ceremony, often wearing barely enough of his uniform to indicate his rank. At the outset of the Civil War, an aide to Illinois governor Richard Yates found that Grant's "features did not indicate any high grade of intellectuality. He was very indifferently dressed, and did not at all look like a military man." After Grant established himself as the Union's foremost general and was given command of its armies, Richard Henry Dana, speaking for generations of litterateurs, similarly observed, "He had no gait, no station, no manner."

Nonetheless, what Grant accomplished was nothing less than phenomenal. Underestimated by just about everyone around him, he faced each problem with coolness and ultimate success, if not perfection. His misgivings about leading troops into a fight had faded by the time he overran a Confederate camp in his first battle at Belmont, Missouri. There, he prevailed in the skirmish, only to lose control of his men as they celebrated, oblivious to approaching Confederate reinforcements who threatened to surround and cut them off. The situation seemed hopeless to some, but not to

Grant, who said that as they had cut their way in, they would cut their way out. This they did in a close call that Grant, the last man to leave the battlefield, would not allow to be repeated.

At Fort Donelson, Grant found his right practically shattered by a Confederate attack, but he saw opportunity in the apparent disaster. Upon receiving the news, he barely revealed his displeasure by crumpling papers in his hand and resolutely told his subordinates, "Gentlemen, the position on the right must be retaken." He realized that his men were "pretty badly demoralized, but the enemy must be more so, for he has attempted to force his way out, but has fallen back: the one who attacks first now will be victorious." Grant ordered his left to attack, stabilized his right, and pressed forward in all directions. His opponent asked for surrender terms a mere twelve hours after seeming to have the upper hand. The "unconditional surrender" on which Grant insisted closed the Union's first major victory.

Two months later, Grant was attacked at Shiloh while waiting for another army to join him. On the first day of battle, Grant's men were driven near the edge of the Tennessee River. Again, Grant understood that both sides were demoralized and that the first to attack would carry the field. To the predictable advice he received from a subordinate, Grant responded, "Retreat? No. I propose to attack them at daylight and whip them." His troops prevailed the next day and drove the Confederates from the field.

These early battles reflected Grant's understanding of the value of keeping the initiative, of retaining an awareness of the enemy's weakness, and of having the courage that is needed to prevent one's own setbacks from making a bad situation worse. Simpson's study recognizes that Grant had limitations, especially in his early battles, but that he had the ability to learn from his mistakes. Simpson also places the rise of Grant in the West in the proper context of an active, engaged general yearning to find a way to break the strategic inertia of his superiors.



*Grant and his staff during the siege of Petersburg, June 1864 to April 1865.*

Perhaps the best evidence of his innovation and energy is the Vicksburg campaign. When Grant began this campaign in the fall of 1862, Vicksburg, Mississippi, on bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River, was considered a virtually impenetrable fortress and the largest obstacle to Union control of the river. During the early phases of the campaign, Grant, realizing that the winter rains elevated the Mississippi's tributaries and precluded effective movement on the part of his troops, had his men engage in a series of efforts that he expected to fail to reach Vicksburg from the north—and then swung the bulk of his men south during the spring amid several diversionary movements that left his opponent's army bewildered.

His troops crossed the Mississippi from Bruinsburg, a considerable distance south of Vicksburg. Defying many expectations, they broke off from their own supply line and proceeded first in a northeasterly direction at lightning speed to the state capital at Jackson before turning west and marching directly toward Vicksburg. In the process, Grant won five battles in seventeen days—four of those victories occurring within six days—and kept two major Confederate armies from uniting against him. The campaign ended in a six-week siege that led to the fall of Vicksburg, and ultimately, full Union control of the Mississippi,

which divided the Confederacy in half. Grant's western campaigns ended with the Chattanooga campaign in eastern Tennessee, which seemed a tactical miracle in its own right.

Simpson surpasses previous scholars in exploring Grant's relationships with other generals and politicians, an important issue in appraising any general operating in a representative democracy. Legend suggests that Lincoln and Grant formed an unbreakable bond the first time the president heard the general's name, but the president's initial support of Grant was actually tentative and equivocal. It truly was not until his success at Vicksburg that Grant had earned Lincoln's full confidence. Throughout the war, Grant had to tolerate incompetent political generals appointed to placate the various factions Lincoln had to keep together in his fragile political coalition. Grant's understanding of the relation between war and politics helped make him the first of the world's truly modern generals, and it would especially serve him during the last year of the war, when he was appointed supreme commander of the Union armies and finally faced Robert E. Lee in the East.

As general in chief, Grant coordinated the movements of Union troops in different theaters to a degree never before attempted. He understood the connection between his work, Lin-

coln's political coalition, and public opinion as military and political objectives met during Lincoln's reelection campaign. On another level, he realized that to succeed, he would have to target Confederate armies rather than cities, which would fall in due course. He also appreciated the need to undermine the enemy's warmaking ability by striking economic as well as military targets. He pursued this goal relentlessly and on an unprecedented level in Virginia, and he supported General William T. Sherman's parallel efforts in his own theater. Keeping Lee pinned by constantly engaging him enabled the success of Sherman's campaign and a decline in Confederate morale in time for Lincoln's reelection.

Grant was spread thin in his capacity as general-in-chief and as de facto commander of the Army of the Potomac (George G. Meade remained its nominal commander), and he had to struggle against not only the Confederate army, but also his own army's fear of Lee. Grant's lack of such fear and his understanding of his foe would be infused into his army, but with bumps along the way. The road to victory would include its share of tactical awkwardness, but in a war in which tactics were subordinated to strategy, it is curious that Grant would earn a reputation as an unskilled butcher.

If a detached observer were told that the Union's eastern command fell short of its goal under six commanders, only to succeed under the seventh, that seventh commander's success would appear anything but the inevitable result of a numerical superiority that his predecessors had also enjoyed. Grant began his campaign in Virginia by crossing the Rapidan River on May 4, 1864, and fighting a brutal battle in the Wilderness initiated by Lee, with heavy losses on both sides. Although a tactical stalemate, the three-day battle failed to halt Grant's progress southward and was a strategic victory for the Union. Within three days, the Union initiative in the East had reached greater heights under Grant than it had under his predecessors during the preceding three years.

Following the Wilderness, Grant moved south, and another bloody battle at Spotsylvania, while tactically indecisive, destroyed Lee's initiative as the Confederate army lost more troops than it could afford by attempting to hold a position that later became known as the Bloody Angle. With Grant's next flank movement, Lee could move only defensively, but he placed his men in formidable works south of the North Anna River that had been built the previous winter.



*Ex-President  
Grant in 1885*

Library of Congress

Contrary to the image of a rash, overaggressive general, Grant showed restraint by declining to attack here and maneuvering past the Pamunkey River instead. Still, he was not immune to error even at this phase of the war, and he ordered an all-out frontal assault at Cold Harbor that led to heavy casualties—a move he would always regret. Once again, though, Grant would be able to turn a setback around when he maneuvered his entire army, undetected by Lee, across the James River between June 15 and 17. His subsequent movement on Petersburg, the breadbasket of Richmond, was ordered with his customary energy and speed, but the lack of compliance with his orders by subordinates (for neither the first nor the last time) made

the capture of Petersburg a matter of a ten-month siege.

The Wilderness Campaign, oddly cited more than any other campaign by critics who debunk Grant's generalship, reflects an aggressive commander who in forty-three days moved his men over one hundred miles of difficult terrain, avoided all supply problems, changed his supply base four times, made nine flanking movements, and crossed four rivers in the face of the enemy. He transported four thousand wagons and massive reserve artillery without losing a single gun, wagon, or animal to enemy capture, and ended up south of the James River, just as he had projected before starting. This was as dynamic a campaign as the eastern theater had ever seen—and as modern a campaign as the world had ever seen. It affirms rather than disproves Grant's flexibility, ability to maneuver, and understanding of the interdependence of campaigns.

Standard textbooks suggest that heavy casualties were the defining characteristic of Grant's generalship, but his losses during the Virginia campaigns were proportionally less than Lee's. (Even while he was fighting in the west, Grant lost fewer men, both in absolute numbers and proportionally, than Lee did in the east.) Grant also had a little-remembered preference for taking prisoners when inflicting his losses. And at Appomattox, following a brilliant pursuit of Lee after Petersburg fell, Grant captured the last of three armies that would surrender to him throughout the war—a feat no other Civil War general even approached.

What was his secret? In Grant's words, "The art of war is simple enough. Find out where your enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike at him as hard as you can and as often as you can, and keep moving on." Could that be it? Look carefully at Grant's other statements on the subject; there's more: "War is progressive, because all the instruments and elements of war are progressive." Also, "there are no fixed laws of war which are not subject to the conditions of the country, the climate, and the habits of the people."



A competent Grant biography need not explore all the nuances of the art of war, but it must understand that the general was a true innovator in his field.

Grant's life was deeply enmeshed with the issue of slavery. Simpson does a good job presenting Grant as one who evolved from a man who was personally close to but uncomfortable with the institution (while falling short of political opposition to it) to one who believed the war should not end without having forever resolved the issue. Grant understood his subordination as general to political officials on the matter of emancipation but used his position to offer opportunities for blacks to function as free laborers and troops, and he took a strong stand against his opponents' unequal treatment of black and white prisoners of war.

Most fundamentally, of course, his military achievement constituted the execution of the Emancipation Proclamation. Grant's public career, taking it through his presidency, promoted and witnessed a more sweeping transition in the status of American blacks, from slaves to full equals under the law, than that of any of his peers in American history. For now, that story must wait until Simpson's second volume. Unfortunately, traditional textbooks, influenced by Confederate apologists, have been less likely to mention Grant's record on race than to suggest Lee's opposition to slavery and secession. Also bewildering is the determined resistance by some to the notion that those who abolished slavery actually intended to abolish slavery.

If Grant is indeed an enigma in American biography—what cancer is to the medical profession—it may be less because of the limitations of Grant than the limitations of his historians, whose agendas have impeded objective analysis. The cure in this particular case can come only with a view of Grant's sixteen-year public career as a continuum. President Grant, far from being a different man from General Grant, made his agenda the full realization of the victory he had forged on the battlefield. Simpson has indicated that his second volume (subtitled "The

Fruits of Victory, 1865-1885") will "treat Grant's last twenty years as one continuous effort to answer the question of what the war meant—and how Grant attempted to shape that definition." If Simpson stays true to this goal, he will be well on his way to articulating the essence of Grant's public

career as no biographer has before. In the meantime (though Fuller remains best for strictly military appraisals), Simpson's first volume is the best educational investment for those seeking an accurate single volume biography of Ulysses S. Grant through the Civil War. ♦



# Arms Inspection and the Man

*Richard Butler's memoir of his struggle against Saddam Hussein.* BY JOHN R. BOLTON

**T**he *Greatest Threat* reveals two Richard Butlers. The first is the determined executive director of the United Nations Special Commission—UNSCOM—who relentlessly sought to uncover and destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction through one of the world's most vigorous experiments in arms control and disarmament.

The second is a true believer in the Church of Arms Control, a man of faith devoted to a "tapestry of treaties" woven since World War II. The measure of Butler's faith is that he still adheres to his church after two years of being scourged almost daily by Saddam Hussein, the U.N. secretary general and his senior staff, and three permanent members of the Security Council (Russia, France, and China).

The unfortunate irony of *The Greatest Threat* is that the second Butler is unwilling to draw the correct conclusions from the first's experiences. Perhaps the two men should be introduced.

*The former assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs, John R. Bolton is senior vice president of the American Enterprise Institute.*

**The Greatest Threat**  
*Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Growing Crisis of Global Security*  
by Richard Butler  
Public Affairs, 304 pp., \$26

Butler's description of UNSCOM's thankless efforts to make Iraq comply with Security Council Resolution 687—the cease-fire resolution adopted at the end of the Gulf War—is required,

if depressing, reading not just for those concerned with Iraq or the Middle East, but for anyone assessing the future shape of world politics, arms control, and "global governance." The next president's foreign policy team should be reading this book now.

**T**ake Iraq, for starters. Butler lays out in careful detail the precise course of Iraq's cheating, obstruction, and deceit, as it attempted to preserve its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile capability. The Iraqis provided false information about their weapons stores and research and manufacturing capabilities; they imposed innumerable restrictions on UNSCOM inspectors; they tried to put many important locations (the "presidential sites" and other "sensitive" areas) off limits; they made UNSCOM's tactics and the whole UNSCOM process the object of attention rather than their own failure to disarm; they attacked American and British participation in UNSCOM; they used the Russian, Chinese, and French to gather intelligence

on UNSCOM's activities (according to Butler, they were paying off the Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov); they engaged in an unending propaganda campaign about U.N. economic sanctions (while food and medicine were stockpiled by the Iraqi military and deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz continued to enjoy expensive Cuban cigars); and they maligned and insulted UNSCOM personnel, particularly Butler. Among other things.

Of course, the Iraqis were correct in their central insight: If they resisted long enough, Western (and especially American) attention would wane, and Iraq would achieve its two post-Gulf War goals: ending the economic sanctions and rebuilding its capability for weapons of mass destruction. By stalling, evading, and then crushing UNSCOM, and by relentlessly ignoring and dodging the sanctions and other U.N. resolutions, the Iraqis have now essentially accomplished both goals. Although the largest share of the blame must rest with the Clinton administration, Butler is reticent about his communications with the United States government, and his account is the "inside" U.N. history. There is, nonetheless, more than enough there to turn anyone's stomach.

Butler's indictment of secretary general Kofi Annan and his senior staff has to be read in its entirety to be fully appreciated. More than any other secretary general, Annan is a product of the United Nations, having spent the bulk of his career there, and as such is as much a distillation of the U.N. ethos as one can imagine. Accordingly, Iraq's enormous diplomatic achievement in enticing Annan into the middle of its dispute with UNSCOM says much about the U.N. Initially, Annan became mesmerized by Iraqi objections to the number of American personnel participating in UNSCOM activities, and dispatched a troika of personal envoys to Baghdad to negotiate a settlement. By so doing, Annan treated Iraq like a U.N. member in good standing, not a defeated aggressor state. Butler skewers this approach, which "was seen by Iraq as further confirmation that Annan was

committed to a diplomatic solution to Iraq's recalcitrance, without obliging it to be disarmed. Iraq's new policy of enhanced resistance to and then destruction of UNSCOM was given a boost."

Then, as the confrontation intensified, Annan decided that he must personally travel to Iraq to meet Saddam Hussein. Annan actually said with a straight face that Saddam was a man "I can do business with." Although Annan's agreement in February 1998 achieved his objective of preventing American and British military action against Iraq (and almost certainly had the Lewinsky-distracted Clinton administration's blessing), it also guaranteed the demise of UNSCOM. By accepting the notion that Iraq's "presidential sites" should receive special treatment, Annan effectively repealed Resolution 687. As Butler bluntly states it: "The leadership of the U.N. had become a facilitator of Iraqi concealment." From that point on, there were "increasing attempts by the friends of Iraq, including the Office of the Secretary General, to question" not just the diplomacy but the substance of UNSCOM's work.

Butler's description of the late 1997 breakdown of consensus among the five permanent members of the Security Council is especially chilling. The dispute over Iraq marked the first major breakdown in cooperation since it began in the late 1980s with American receptivity to Gorbachev's "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy. And the split sent a devastating signal to observers in Baghdad. Although China always stood somewhat apart from this process, and Russia never entered it fully, the most distressing defector was France. Its U.N. ambassador described as "perhaps a truckers' picnic" a high-altitude picture of 130 heavy Republican Guard trucks fleeing a site UNSCOM inspectors were approaching. "France played (and continues to play) both sides of the street, happily accepting every benefit from its place in the Western alliance while never feeling seriously restrained in pursuing narrower national interests," Butler writes. "They know that, after a period of agi-

tation, their allies will always forgive and excuse them: 'Oh, well, you know how the French are.' They suffer no losses from this game, and so they go on playing it."

And yet despite this cavalcade of error and folly chronicled by the first Butler in *The Greatest Threat*, the second Butler still adheres to the true faith of arms control through international law. In his introduction, he refers to the Security Council as "the lawmaker" in this field, the secretary general as "the guardian of the law," "the authority of international law," and the Security Council's "failure to enforce their own law." This is heavy-duty faith—especially when what follows over the next two hundred pages is proof that Butler may have been the only person involved in the entire UNSCOM exercise who actually believed any of this theology.

Indeed, Butler himself does understand "the greatest threat" of his book's title: "Iraq's successful violation of the treaties against weapons of mass destruction has shaken those [arms-control] agreements and the faith held by nations in them. . . . Saddam's cheating has been detected, but it has not been stopped. . . . If Saddam finally gets away with it, the whole structure could well collapse."

This is exactly correct. Unfortunately, Butler's solution is for the permanent members of the Security Council to "solemnly declare to the world that they will always act together to remedy" violations of an arms-control treaty, and that, therefore, "they will undertake never to use or to threaten to use their veto in such circumstances."

But it was precisely the inability of the declared nuclear powers to act together that allowed Iraq to escape from UNSCOM to begin with—and Saddam's Iraq was the easy case. If the members of the Security Council cannot maintain their discipline against a state that systematically obstructed their own authority—after it had used weapons of mass destruction against its own population and committed unprovoked aggression against a small neighbor—what can they handle? ♦

# The Sweet Smell of Success

*Burt Lancaster really did do it his way.*

BY DAVID EVANIER

Here is how movie stars were born in the old days. In September 1945, Burt Lancaster, a thirty-one-year-old former circus acrobat and soldier who had just returned to Manhattan after the war, went up to the Royalton Hotel in his soldier's uniform to ask his girlfriend's boss, a radio executive, for a job. While he was riding up in the elevator, another passenger stared at him, "putting the mince pies" on him. Lancaster walked down the aisle to the office and the man followed behind and then disappeared.

As soon as Lancaster entered the office and met the executive, the phone rang. The caller was the man in the elevator, a scout for a Broadway producer. The scout was looking for an actor who could play a sergeant in a Broadway play, and the pool of available actors was at a wartime low. On November 21 Lancaster opened on

Broadway in *A Sound of Hunting*. He immediately received seven contract offers for the movies. He went with Hal Wallis at Paramount. By April Lancaster was hired by producer Mark Hellinger for the filming of Hemingway's *The Killers*. The film made him a star.

**Burt Lancaster**  
*An American Life*  
by Kate Buford  
Knopf, 447 pp., \$27.50

Who that has ever seen Lancaster can forget him? "Lancaster had an imperial romantic aura," Pauline Kael wrote. "The voice, the rhythm of his speech had a welcome authority: There's nobody else in the world with a voice like that, the smoothness with the remnant of roughness underneath." He appeared larger than life, an invulnerable colossus of a man, with his rugged frame, handsome face, and huge teeth. He spoke with a precise diction unlike that of any other actor. And he had charisma in spades: He was the actor the audience could not take their eyes off of. George Tyne, a cast member of *A Sound of Hunting*, remembered that in the middle of an important line of what Tyne hoped would be his breakthrough role, "he looked out at the audience expecting a sea of rapt faces.

Instead, all eyes were focused on the tall, blond, iconic newcomer, silent in the corner." He was the ideal movie hero.

But soon the story takes a twist, and this is the point that Kate Buford's *Burt Lancaster: An American Life* is very good at elucidating. Lancaster's active, discerning intelligence shaped an evolving career at odds with standard Hollywood hagiography. Lancaster kept reaching, playing against type, looking for "stretch roles" that would let him grow as an actor. It was a bait-and-switch strategy, playing the superhero in one film, then playing roles the audience did not anticipate of him, confounding their expectations. He chose scripts that were often uncommercial but had a special intelligence and quality. He did not want to be stereotyped and he did not want to be bored. Over a lifetime he chose a roller coaster of roles. An autodidact, he wanted to know everything and be everything: producer, director, and writer as well as actor. "Stars have a persona that stays the same; therefore they must be uninteresting monoliths that never change," director Alexander Mackendrick said. "Burt was better than a star. He had a moral courage at playing roles that are quite against any star image."

He made some huge mistakes. He turned down the chance to play Stanley Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire* on Broadway, the role that made Marlon Brando famous, and in later years he relinquished the chance to play the lead in the film *Patton*. His lawyer, Leon Kaplan, noted that "he complicated his professional life by being too partial to intellectual, loser-type causes." In late life he took (when, admittedly, the offers were not very plentiful and it was a way of staying afloat for him) a series of anti-American roles (usually playing right-wing conspirators), including one screwball-left film, *Executive Action*, based on a book co-authored by leading conspiracy theorist Mark Lane. (Recent disclosures of Lane's support in his later career by the anti-Semitic Liberty Lobby and how useful the KGB found

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him to be are not mentioned by Buford and were not known in Lancaster's day.)

But overall, in this incisive, nearly novelistic biography, Buford successfully conveys a life of chance-taking, bravura, and integrity, a life of inner change brought on by introspection and self-honesty. Lancaster did not try to stay young, he did not become an alcoholic or a drug addict as some other stars in middle age did, and he became less abusive in his relationships as he aged. A rags-to-riches story, it was a rare life. Lancaster knew it, and did not waste the opportunity.

In fact, Lancaster was a man of inner violence who was drawn in 1962 to the role of the convicted murderer, Robert Stroud, in *The Birdman of Alcatraz*. During forty years of solitary confinement, Stroud became an expert on caged birds, the author of *Stroud's Digest of the Diseases of Birds* and the owner of more than three hundred canaries in his prison cell. Lancaster felt that Stroud "took a miserable, unnatural existence and yet made it a meaningful thing." The actor even conducted his own doomed, Mailer-like crusade to get Stroud released—though Stroud's wife later wrote that "his only reason for having birds was [to] destroy them and thereby in a small way satisfy his desire to kill."

*The Birdman of Alcatraz* was one of Lancaster's characteristically uncommercial projects. After all, it was mainly about birds and about self-transformation. Almost nothing happens, in movie convention terms, and the film is very long. Two thousand canaries were flown in from Japan. Lancaster spent two weeks working with them as well as with sparrows, taping birdseed to his finger and patiently waiting for the creatures to hop onto his hand. It encompassed his curious nature, his defiance, and social rebelliousness: "Stroud will not kowtow," Lancaster commented. "He will not make amends for what he has done. He will not say 'Daddy.'"

"It was his masterwork, a creation out of the prison of his own self," Buford writes. "Never before and nev-

er again would he, an obsessive by nature, be obsessed to this level with a movie. If Elmer Gantry was who Lancaster really was, Stroud was who he wanted to be." Even though Lancaster was known for his protectiveness toward the weak, he never denied his own inner demons.

He told Michael Munn, author of a book about Lancaster published in England in 1995: "It's true that I'm a very emotional person—even a violent



Lancaster, the circus performer, in the 1930s.

person. But there's a part of me that doesn't like what goes on inside of me, so I try to control it." Lancaster earned his third Oscar nomination for *The Birdman of Alcatraz*. Then, in 1968, came yet another reach and an even odder choice: *The Swimmer*, based on a story by John Cheever. *The Swimmer* follows a Connecticut suburbanite swimming home one afternoon through his neighbors' swimming pools in an alcoholic haze. When he reaches home, he finds it is locked and deserted, his wife and kids gone.

Lancaster took the role partly so he would have to learn to swim. He was afraid of the water, and he recruited the coach of UCLA's water polo team to teach him. The film died at the box office. According to Buford, it was "so much the reality of its time that it was unbearable, unwatchable." Typically, Lancaster would balance this out with one of his biggest box office bonanzas, *Airport*, in 1970.

He did it all from the top of the heap. He was handsomer, bigger, rougher, more competitive, more virile, and more ferocious than anyone else. And he was a risk-taker throughout his life. He had black rages, and it is clear he could be brutal. In Lancaster's independent production firm, Hecht-Hill-Lancaster, the offices had an atmosphere of snarling intimidation, alcoholic frenzy, and promiscuity. The executive bathroom was furnished with a purple velvet sofa, gold plumbing, onyx features, and "HHL" embroidered in real gold thread on special hand towels.

James Hill, an added-on partner, recently told *Vanity Fair*: "People were frightened of Burt, and he never did anything to make people unfrightened of him." The atrium of hundreds of twittering canaries and finches would reportedly stop twittering when Lancaster entered the double-story entrance foyer. Buford says Lancaster once yelled at his partner Harold Hecht: "You dirty little Jew bastard, I ought to step on you and squash you like a f—ing bug!"

He grew up in Italian Harlem, a neighborhood rich with energy and vitality, the child of Protestant Irish immigrants. As a young man he participated in sports and theatricals at the Union Settlement House, a church-run institution. It was probably at Union that he imbibed his "progressive" politics, which meant for him taking the side of the underdog both personally and politically. To Buford, this dimension of her subject is a big plus, for Lancaster fits the bill of political correctness. She even makes a fuzzy case for his "bisexuality" by citing unreliable FBI gossip (probably



because that would make him perfect in her eyes).

What differentiated him from his radical chic Hollywood compatriots, however, was his lack of grandstanding: He kept a low profile, he wanted no credit, and his instincts were often in the service of common decency. He employed many blacklisted writers and actors, and was a principal speaker for the Hollywood contingent at the March on Washington in 1963. In this regard, he comes off with far more integrity than his rival Brando. But in terms of the second and third stages of his career, the contrast with the vegetating Brando is even more striking. Lancaster stayed alive and vital.

He was one of the first stars to form his own production company, in 1954. The aspirations of Hecht-Hill-Lancaster were high: They actually made good films, including (without Lancaster) Paddy Chayefsky's *Marty* and *The Bachelor Party*, *The Birdman of Alcatraz*, *Come Back, Little Sheba*, and Tennessee Williams's *The Rose Tattoo*—"intelligent movies with an emotional heat [that] crossed over into art." Their writing staff included Clifford Odets, Ray Bradbury, and Ernest Lehman. In the mid-1950s, HHL triggered a new era of filmmaking, in which stars would head companies that rivaled the major studios.

His own work was totally unpredictable, from *The Killers*, *Brute Force*, *All My Sons*, and *Kiss the Blood Off My Hands*, to *From Here to Eternity*, *Come Back, Little Sheba*, and *The Rainmaker*—and his three greatest triumphs, *Elmer Gantry* (for which he won the Academy Award), *Sweet Smell of Success*, and, in his twilight years, *Atlantic City*, which gave him his fourth Oscar nomination. Despite his massive frame, he was internally fragile throughout his life, and he was more interested in art and change than in big bucks.

The apogee of his career was his portrayal of the monster columnist patterned after Walter Winchell in *Sweet Smell of Success*, a film conceived, nurtured, and produced by his own company and starring himself. A com-



As Stroud in *The Birdman of Alcatraz*

mercial failure in 1957, it ranks today among the great films of all time. In J.J. Hunsecker, Lancaster portrayed a "brute force" not unlike his own. There are some immortal lines in the film, including, "Match me, Sidney" (Lancaster speaking to Tony Curtis and holding up his cigarette to be lit), and, "The cat's out of the bag, and the bag's in the river," written during the filming by Clifford Odets on a freezing Times Square morning at 4 A.M. on a typewriter in the back of a prop truck. That's the electricity of genius, and it was all generated by a one-time acrobat who swung to the top of the ring, and, balancing there, decided to risk it all on becoming a true artist.

Even by 1969, John Cheever would write that Lancaster was "lithe, comely [but] somewhat disfigured by surgical incisions." Lancaster once told a friend that the only real part of him left was his eyes. And yet he came to terms with age. This self-acceptance allowed him more triumphs as an actor: in *Atlantic City* in 1980 (he was in great physical pain during the filming),

*Local Hero* in 1983, and finally *Field of Dreams* in 1989. Speaking of Lancaster's willingness to play an old man in *Atlantic City*, director Louis Malle told Michael Munn:

It was an act of heroism for Burt to allow himself to be seen so starkly as an old timer. . . . When I first saw Burt, I thought, My God! What great irony if a man, whose image is so much the opposite, should play this silly old man who is a voyeur, watching a girl undress in the opposite apartment. I did not want to make him completely ridiculous. I wanted to show something moving about him. But because he is Burt Lancaster, an actor who carried around a heroic image all his life, there is that extra sense of humiliation.

But he was anything but ridiculous. Critic Richard Schickel wrote in *Time*: "You can practically smell the blue rinse in his hair; the pressing of a tie, the caressing of a whiskey glass, the sniffing of a wine cork, incantatory gestures. They are supposed to ward off the new tawdriness of the gambling casinos, which is replacing the old salt-water-taffy funk of the boardwalk town. While the wrecking balls swing all around him, Lou complains that even the ocean isn't what it used to be." *Atlantic City* was a spectacular comeback for him, but his deteriorating physical condition did not allow him to really capitalize on it.

He did keep working until 1991, when he was felled by a stroke, and he died in 1994 at the age of eighty. In the final three years, he was an old man without speech in a wheelchair with a blanket over his lap, looking out at the Hollywood he had reigned over as few actors ever did.

Near the end, he did not want to be seen by his colleagues. But actor James Earl Jones and his wife Ceci were allowed to visit. "Wanting to be sure he recognized her" on her farewell, Ceci turned to him and slightly lifted her skirt. Jones recalled: "Burt raised up in his bed and said, 'Yeah!,' like 'I remember you, and boy, do I like what I see!'" It was the first clear word he uttered without prompting or urging." He navigated the end of his life as he had navigated all the rest of it. ♦

## Italian elite force invades Sweden by mistake

**From Richard Owen**  
.....  
in Rome

FOR most of the armies taking part, it was a routine exercise that involved little more than turning up at the right place.

For Italy's elite mountain infantry regiment, this proved too much. The 116 soldiers from the Alpini unit were due to arrive at Kristiansand in Norway on Saturday for a Nato exercise.

Nobody had consulted a map, however. Puzzled immigration officers at the airport of Kristianstad in Sweden watched as the troops, in their distinctive Alpine caps decorated with feathers, disembarked some 300 miles from where they should have been.

"It does not seem to have occurred to anyone in the unit



that Sweden is not part of Nato," the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* commented. "Kristiansand and Kristianstad may sound remarkably similar, but that is no excuse for Italy invading Sweden in error." Kristiansand is on the southern Norwegian coast, facing Denmark, while Kristianstad is

in southern Sweden, not far from Malmo.

The incident comes at a particularly embarrassing time for the authorities, who are trying to counteract an "unfair and outdated" image of the Italian military as comically inept.

Defence Ministry officials said that the plane had been chartered from a civil airline. The flight had "not followed the usual military procedures". A spokesman for the airline said that as there was also a Kristiansund near Trondheim in central Norway, it was not surprising that the pilot had lost his bearings.

General Anselmo Donnari, the Italian military attaché in Oslo, said that the troops had eventually reached Norway "in good order", and the exercise had started as planned.